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FRANK LESLIE'S

BOYS' AND GIRLS' WEEKLY.

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INVENTIVE BEN; Or, HOW A BOY BECAME A JACK-OF-ALL-TRADES AND MASTER, TOO.

"'OH, MY BAG!' SHE MOANED. 'MY BONDS! MY MONEY!' AT THE SAME TIME RUSHING TOWARD THE APPARATUS AND PEEPING INTO THE BOX. 'OH, I'M RUINED!' SAYING WHICH, SHE FAINTED."

INVENTIVE BEN;

Or,

How a Boy Became a Jack-of-all-Trades and Master, Too.

By Commodore Ah-Look.

CHAPTER VI.

THE MECHANICAL DUSTER.

"SO they're dismissed you from the school—eh, Ben?" remarked Romaine, as they quitted the manager's office and proceeded toward the elevator used for conveying the factory "hands" to the upper floors of the building. "I heard that you had a grand old time with the new teacher."

"Did he tell you so, sir?" inquired the boy, as mildly as though he was not joking. "I don't think he enjoyed my inventions; he didn't seem to see things as I did."

"Perhaps he didn't," significantly answered Romaine, as the lift deposited them on the top loft of the factory; then, as he prepared to open a very dirty-looking door, he paused and said, in a lower tone: "Ben here, my son; if you try any of your tricks in this business you'll get licks—m'stan'? You may invent what you like and report it to me, when I'll see if there's anything in it, but I warn you, if you begin to play any games on our dusters, they'll warm you."

"Dusters?" ejaculated Ben, who knew what the foreman meant. "You sin't going to set me on to that work, are you?"

Dusters are the boys employed in a rubber factory to dust gum thread and other articles with powered plumbago or black-lead. This is very dirty work, and ruins both the health and garments of those employed on it, they having to breathe an atmosphere laden with fine particles of the mineral, which enters their lungs and produces violent attacks of coughing and blood-spitting.

"Well, Mr. Padmore began life as a duster, and so did I," said Romaine, adding, with a grin, "Perhaps you'll be able to invent a perfect machine for dusting rubber thread. We have bought several, but they didn't work well. Mind, it must be one in which the skeins cannot tangle. If you don't mean to accept this job, though, say so, as I have another boy in view."

"I'm going to do anything you set me to!" resolutely answered the lad, and presently they entered a long attic, filled with a dense dust, amid which Ben noticed a number of bins at which boys were at work.

"Here, Gregson," shouted the foreman to the head duster of the gang, a much-begrimed youth of eighteen, whom Ben knew by sight, "come and instruct this green hand."

Saying which he vanished, evidently not liking the dust-laden air and cloud of black-lead that settled on his garments.

"Hello, Thatch!" was Gregson's salutation, as he advanced toward our young friend; "go into the washroom and take off your jacket and vest. Have you brought an old suit?"

Ben replied "No," and was loaned some rags by his acquaintances, and having put them on, entered upon his new duty.

The vulcanised india-rubber had been cut into thin threads, and these now would have adhered to the cotton or silk, with which it was to be woven into webbing for congress gaiters; therefore it was sent up a hoist in big bundles, like yarn, separated, and each hank dusted in a bin of the powder, this process being so repulsive to any one who liked a clean skin, and in every way anything but pleasant for the boys. However, Ben worked at his task like a good fellow, and at noon, when the factory bell pealed out its warning, resumed his clothes and started homeward, on his way encountering Joe Briggs, who, noticing his black face, shouted, derisively:

"Hello, snowball!—hello, duster!"

Truth to tell, our friend was not over-pleased with his new position, and felt that, just as soon fight as eat, so, advancing to his enemy, he quietly remarked:

"Take off your jacket, London."

"Why?" sneered the other. "You don't think I'm going to fight you, now you're in that mess, do you?"

"Ye-s," nodded Ben. "Guess I do."

"Well, I ain't," snarled London, eying him half alarmed. "You go and clean yourself, then I will meet you."

Without any further parley, Ben sailed in, and, to the delight of the factory boys, gave Joe a severe drubbing, during which he rendered his opponent almost as black as himself; having accomplished which he walked off to dinner.

"Why, Ben, I thought you were a tramp as I saw you come up the street," exclaimed his aunt, as he entered the kitchen. "Surely, they haven't made a duster of you?"

Nodding in his dry, comical fashion, he removed his jacket and vest, and, as he scraped his features, remarked:

"Yes, they have, and I've made one of my noble London!" whereupon he told her about his work and encounter with Joe Briggs, ending with: "And the way I dusted him would have made you smile, aunt, I tell you."

"What do you do with the bundles of thread when they are dusted?" inquired the good woman, who was curious about his new trade.

"We send them down a canvas shoot, and they are weighed and packed off to the elastic webbing makers," was his response, as he dried his face on a jack-towel. "You see, the more black-lead there is in the gum thread the more profit the factory makes. I don't admire the job overmuch, but I ain't going back to Newman Noggs."

For four days Ben breathed the vile air of the dusting-loft, then set to work inventing an apparatus to perform the labor.

Taking his dinner with him, and remaining in the factory during the meal-hour, he got a peep at the condemned machines to which Romaine had alluded, and, after explaining his idea to the foreman, obtained her permission to try his hand on improving one of them.

By Saturday he had completed the alterations, which were very simple, and on the Monday following the apparatus was raised to the attic-floor and connected by belting with a shaft below, the dusters looking on in a surly, rebellious fashion.

"What's that cussed mash-een for?" demanded Gregson, as Ben started it empty, in order to try if it would run smoothly.

"You will and you'll see, old man," coolly responded the young inventor, and that afternoon, when the gang of boys returned from dinner, they found all the windows open, the "mechanical duster" performing their tasks, without raising a cloud of dust as they did, and Ben, seated on a stool, watching his work with a grin of satisfaction.

"What have we got to do now?" growled the foreman of the gang.

"Look on and admire my invention," chuckled Thatcher, as, opening a sort of man-hole, he discharged a number of bundles of well-dusted rubber-thread down the canvas shoot; at the foot of which Mr. Padmore, the manager, Romaine and all the foremen were assembled to weigh the skeins and test the results of Ben's ingenuity.

Down came the elastic packages, which bounded and quivered as they struck the floor beneath the mouth of the canvas shoot, and in a few moments samples were selected and placed in the scales, and everybody praising the weight attained, which meant profit to the concern.

Leaving the manager with the foreman, we will return to the upper floor, where Thatcher was explaining the apparatus to his scowling fellow-dusters.

"I just hook each hank on, this way," he remarked, suiting the action to the word. "Then I shake them straight—so—put in a fresh supply of black-lead, close the door, shift the shafting-belt on to the drum, sit down and let her rip!"

With which he watched the revolutions of the machine, and having discharged a second quantity of thread down the shoot, turned to the crowd and said:

"Now, one of you try your hand at running it."

With a savage cry they went for the inventor, and after giving him a severe pummeling, carried him to a bin, half-filled with black-lead, into which they shot the indignant boy, and rolled him until he resembled a well-polished stove.

Emerging with a quick motion, Ben shook the dust from his limbs and excitedly demanded:

"What do you mean by that?"

"What do you mean by fixing up yonder machine to deprive us of our bread?" shouted Gregson.

"You'll get other employment in the factory that won't be half so unhealthy," exclaimed Ben. "That's why I invented it."

"You'll get what you want!" cried the other; saying which he bade the dusters smash the machine.

"Stop!" cried the plucky boy, gallantly facing the now thoroughly crazy gang, who were ready for anything. "Don't touch this apparatus; it ain't mine; it belongs to the company, and you have no right to destroy it."

"You've no right to invent improvements and deprive us of our lively-wood," sneeringly retorted Gregson. "Git out of this!" whereupon he urged the rioters to advance in a body and wreck the thing.

Catching up a strong stick, used for breaking lumps in the black-lead, Ben endeavored to defend his charge, but overpowered by numbers, was soon knocked down, and the mechanical duster reduced to kindling.

"There!" cried the ringleader, as he kicked the fragments hither and thither, and scowled upon Thatcher, who ruefully surveyed the scene; "now you just dust out of this, or it will be the worse for you."

"When I'm ordered by Mr. Padmore I will go," was his quiet rejoinder. "You may bust that old machine, but you can't stop my invention—no, sir!"

Just then the examiners below, who were timing the working of the apparatus, shouted up the speaking-tube:

"More thread! Has the duster broken down already?"

"More thread!" yelled Gregson, who knew that he and his mates would get into trouble for what they had done. "Let's shuck Ben down the shoot and get!"

"Ish!" cheered the others, and ere Thatcher could get away he was seized, raised off his feet and thrust headforemost into the black shoot.

"Thread coming!" hailed Gregson, as they let go of their victim, who, when released by them, shot down the canvas passage like a stone down a well, and landing on the rubber thread below, bounced up a foot or two, then burst into a roar of laughter.

CHAPTER VII.

IN WHICH THE MANAGER TRIES TO CHEAT BEN.

THE sudden appearance in their midst of a boy black as a negro, roaring as though he thought it a good joke, was annoying to the manager and a puzzle to the foremen; so when Ben quitted off a little Mr. Padmore sharply demanded:

"Who are you, eh? and what do you mean by coming down that shoot?"

Whereupon the lad rose, and resuming his usual grave manner, replied:

"I'm Thatcher, sir; I've come to my feller-dusters don't appreciate my invention as you do. You see, they not only smashed the mechanical all to bits, but gave me a passage down the shoot;" adding, with a comical sigh, "this is my reward for making something useful."

"I knew them boys would bust that machean," remarked Romaine. "It's always the way when we tries to benefit them."

"Send the entire gang to me," said the manager, and the rioters were stopped at the gate and marched back to the place where stood the manager, his assistants and their victim, who, on seeing them, grinned, as much as to say, "Hello, boys. How do you feel now?" while they looked as stupid as a row of pins.

Ben related his story, and when he had ended the dusters told theirs, Gregson, who acted as chief spokesman, accusing the inventor of taking the bread out of their mouths, and ending by saying:

"It's all very well for fellers like Thatcher to pretend they don't like lead-dust—we does," turning to his fellow-rioters, "don't we, mates?"

"Ye-as!" they loudly answered, "we does! We don't want any machines."

"Then you're a lot of noisy, inquired Ben, "you spit blood, don't you? You've told me it was all along of that graphite dust, which got into your lungs!"

The young man looked foolish, but did not reply.

"Jones!" asked the inventor, turning to another of his assailants, "you told me that the dust killed your brother Sam, didn't you? and that you knew it was injuring your lungs?"

"Mo brother died of typo-horrid fever!" growled Jones.

"Boys!" remarked Mr. Padmore, "I tell you how I'll settle this. If you will pay for a suit of new clothes for Thatcher, I'll put you to work in the picking-room, otherwise you are all discharged. If you had come to me or to your foreman, you could have been sent to various duties, and not dismissed. This lad shall be paid for his invention, and will be promoted to the rubber-room. Now what do you say—is it pay or go?"

The rebels consulted a while, then answered:

"We'll pay. We felt mad at first, but we was wrong!"

"But, see here, I won't take your money!" stoutly observed Ben, as he shook hands with them all round. "I did what I thought was right; however, now I understand everybody don't take so kindly to my inventions as Mr. Padmore does," and when the boys had retired, he smiled in his dry style, and addressing the manager, inquired:

"Well, what do you think my invention is worth?"

"Leave it to you to name a figure!" smilingly answered the gentleman; thinking that Ben would mention fifty or a hundred dollars, but the lad was as cute as he was inventive, and drawing forth a pencil, figured out the following on a scrap of paper he picked up from the floor.

Estimated average of duster boys employed weekly	-	20
Estimated weekly wages per boy, $3.00	-	3 00
Amount paid weekly for dusting	-	$60 00
		52
		120
		300
Estimated wages paid per annum	-	$3120 00
Cost of a new machine, say	- $ 250 00	
Number of new machines required, say	- 4	
Cost of machines to do work of twenty boys	- $1000 00	
Value of steam-power, now going to waste, insurance, rent, etc.	- $1120 00	
Estimated cost first year	- $2120 00	2120 00
Profit, first year, which ought to go to Inventive Ben	-	- $1000 00

Mem.—Above does not include extra profit coming to works on account of machine loading the thread with lead, twice as much as the dusters did. I think this ought to be considered.

(Signed) BENJAMIN THATCHER."

While he was figuring the foregoing, the manager and his assistants were chatting over the benefit of his improvement to the machine; but when he gravely handed the paper to Mr. Padmore, the latter became angry, remarking:

"Pay you a thousand dollars? Why! you have no patent upon it, and you mean make our money of them, or else I tell you what I'll do—I will give you a hundred dollars!"

Ben's eyes twinkled for a second, as he hated to be cheated out of his rights; however, he calmly replied:

"Give me the money—in gold!"

"Now you talk sensibly," said the manager, leading the way to the office. "What would a boy like you do with a thousand dollars?"

"I'd show you, if you'd give 'em to me," was his retort.

"We'll employ you in altering the old machines, at a good salary," observed Padmore. "I did not get rich all at once."

"You ain't me!" was Ben's curt response. "It would puzzle you to do what I have done!"

The boy received his hundred dollars, signed away all claim to his invention, and was walking off, when the manager remarked:

"Go and wash up, my son; then, when you have bought a new suit, come back and begin work on the dusting-machine."

"No, thankee!" he coldly returned. "You can get somebody else to do that. I've had enough of you!"

"Why, nobody knows how to alter them, but yourself!" cried the man. "We can't do without you!"

"I sin't got any patent on it, so you can go ahead, mister," chuckled Ben. "You can make as many as you like; I won't hinder you."

"Oh, nonsense!" pleaded the other. "Come, be honorable, and do as you agreed."

"Be *honorable*!" grinned the delighted lad. "See here, master, when you thought you'd bought Inventive Ben cheap—gave him a paltry hundred dollars for what you know is worth thousands to you, you rubbed it in nicely, didn't you? Now it's my turn, and I sin't going back on myself!"

With which he jingled his money in his pocket and walked out of the office, leaving the would-be smart manager quite crestfallen.

Upon reaching home he found his Uncle John, who was looking very solemn.

"Why, Ben, my boy!" he exclaimed; "where did you get in that all-fired mess?"

"Oh, nonsense!" laughed the lad, and, on hearing the story, his relative said:

"You're awful smart, nevvy. They'll come after you when they find they can't alter the old machine themselves."

With a sly wink the young inventor drew a piece of the broken duster from his pocket, and, holding it up, said, with a dry laugh:

"When the boys smashed the one I fixed I secured this—it is the key to my improvement. Let 'em try—they can't make one like it anyhow."

"You're a genius!" admiringly observed Mr. Wilkins. "Oh, Ben, I wish I were like you and could turn my hands to anything!" and he uttered a deep sigh.

"What's up, uncle?" he demanded.

"My employer," ruefully replied John, "Ben, he's busted and the tannery is closed."

"Now don't you fret, uncle," said the boy. "You were good to me when I had nary friends and I'll help you. Take this hundred dollars," with which he held out the gold.

For a while the old man could scarcely reply, so touched was he by his nephew's gratitude, while Mrs. Wilkins, who had overheard all that was said, came in quickly, and, hastily dashing away the tears from her eyes, remarked:

"Ben, we sin't come to borryin' yet; but when we do we'll apply to you. God bless you!"

That evening Romaine called and endeavored to coax the lad to go to work on the machines. However, Ben was firm, so, on the following day he received a visit from Mr. Padmore and a lawyer.

It was amusing to hear them alternately threaten and coax the boy, and to watch his comically-shrewd face, as he drawled:

"Two thousand dollars secured to my uncle and I'll fix one machine for a pattern, and you can patent all you like of it."

"You only asked one thousand yesterday!" indignantly remarked the manager.

"That ain't to-day," dryly retorted Ben. "My uncle has bin to considerable expense raising me, and I owe him a thousand dollars or so."

It was finally agreed that the lad should receive two thousand dollars—at which price the invention was decidedly cheap. And after the necessary papers had been signed by John Wilkins, who was legally Ben's guardian, the lawyer, a very smart individual, inquired if the young fellow had any other inventions to dispose of.

"I've got my fool-catcher," drawled the boy, as he airily regarded the man, adding: "I should think it would be an elegant machine for a lawyer."

This tickled Padmore, who, now that he was in for it, intended to act squarely by the young inventor.

"Trot out your fool-catcher, my son."

"You must trot up-stairs if you want to see it," he smilingly answered, and up they climbed to the attic.

"I don't see any fool-catcher," jeered the lawyer, glancing round the place. "Pshaw! Padmore, let us quit this;" but on Ben exhibiting the hole and pointing to the inscription, in went the visitor's head, and, as usual, up flew the panel, whereupon Ben quietly remarked:

"Perhaps I ain't caught it fool this time, neither?"

CHAPTER VIII.

BEN GOES BACK TO SCRUB OAK SCHOOL.

LIKE a wise man, the lawyer compromised with the inventor, and paid him five dollars to let him out.

"You're too smart to live, boy," he remarked, as he rubbed his neck. "Confound it! I must have been a fool to have poked my head into that hole."

"Jee! what the school-teacher said," chuckled Ben, as he reclosed the panel; and, turning to the manager, quietly remarked, "Would you like try your luck, sir?"

"No, you precious young rascal, I would not," laughingly answered the gentleman. "I'm glad you caught my friend, Lawyer Holt. It was one of the most amusing exhibitions I ever witnessed."

"Yes," grinned the boy; "it allus tickles everybody more than it does the one who has his head in the hole. It got a good, strong holt on him, didn't it?"

"I wish I had as good a one on you!" muttered the gentleman. "You've fooled me once, my son, but I'll never let you say that again."

Ben did not reply, and leading the way downstairs, was nodding "Good-by," when Penny Lee came along the street, and upon noticing her friend, she stopped, saying:

"Oh, Ben, Newman Noggs is going, and Colonel Piper is to keep school for the rest of the term. Won't you come? He's afraid of you."

"It is tempting," he answered, with a wink. "I think I could make it lively for that Young Committee, but I've got a job on hand." With which he explained his contract.

"Two thousand dollars!" she cried. "Oh, Ben, won't you be proud, neither?"

"I don't think I shall," he rejoined. "I shall go to school again, for a while, as I want to learn more than I know of many things; then I'll try some regular business. What do you think would suit you, Fan?"

"I reckon you'd do well in a machine shop or a drug-store," she answered. "You'll get along, anyhow! I must go to dinner. Good-morning."

"A machine-shop!" he chuckled. "Ye-s, and a drug-store! I'd like to try inventing medicines. I'd make up something that would knock spots out of folks!"

And gazing pensively up the street, after Padmore and the lawyer, he retired indoors to his meal.

The next day he went to work at the factory, and, aided by his uncle, turned another useless old machine into a patent duster, and duly received the promised reward.

There was an eight hundred-dollar mortgage upon his relative's house, which was duly paid off, the roof was reshingled, and sundry repairs made. These swallowed up one of his thousand dollars, and the other he handed over to the custody of his guardian.

"Won't you come and work in the factory?" one day urged the manager, as they met on Main Street, but the lad respectfully declined, and the next morning shouldered his strap of books and marched off to school.

Had a ghost walked into the building Piper could not have betrayed more alarm, for he dreaded being the object of the boy's pranks.

"I understood we dismissed you, Thatcher?" he faltered, as Ben smilingly surveyed the delighted scholars. "I really don't think I can receive you back until I—I consult the rest of the committee."

"Don't take all that trouble about me, colonel," cheerfully observed the boy, resuming his old seat; for the teacher's rostrum, and very prudently Doctor Hudson and Mr. Brightman arrived, when Piper, gaining courage, rose, and after explaining Ben's request, observed:

"If he is permitted to remain, I shall retire."

"Well," mumbled the doctor, settling himself down in a chair, though about to enjoy a doze, "what has Thatcher got to say for himself? I understood he had found employment in the rubber works."

Hearing which Ben rose to his desk, and in his inimitable dry way related his experiences since leaving school.

At first the boys and girls only scuffed; however, as he proceeded, both they and the committee roared with laughter, although most of them already knew the story.

"I learned how to dust rubber thread," he innocently remarked, "and I invented an improvement in a machine, but somebody found, when I came to offer it to the manager, that my education was deficient, so"—nodding round at the convulsed scholars—"I've come back to learn some more."

Spite of his merriment, Colonel Piper flatly refused to continue in charge if Ben were permitted to return, and calmly mopped his face, while comparing the lad with all sorts of folks, good, bad and indifferent, winding up with:

"Now, fellow-members of the committee, either that boy or myself is to gain a victory and run this school. Either one of us can remain, but not both."

And, having thus announced his ultimatum, he frowned at Ben, and resumed his seat, after which the lad rose and said, without even so much as smiling:

"I suppose that motion be put to the meeting?"

"Eh?" ejaculated the astonished doctor, who, during the colonel's speech, had slumbered like an over-fed bear—"eh, what is it?"

"It's me, doctor—Ben Thatcher," gravely continued the boy, as the scholars almost choked with trying to keep down their sniggers, and the colonel glowered worse than ever. "I am afraid I don't know enough in one way to teach the grammar

class, but you bet I could do as well as he does with the primary and intermediate." Adding, with a merry wink, "I knowed they'd all vote for me."

"We—we—what does this mean?" demanded the now thoroughly awakened doctor, regarding Ben with blank amazement.

"It's between me and Colonel Piper," continued the boy, who had taken the nervous committeeman's remarks rather seriously. "He says either one of us is to run this school, and—well, I'd jes' as lieve do it as not!"

"Silence, you impudent fellow!" thundered Brightman. "Do you, for a moment, imagine you could teach this school?"

"Guess I could, as well as some folks," calmly answered Ben; hearing which the scholars fairly yelled with delight.

For a moment the committee did nothing but glance at one another, then, after rapping the school to order, the doctor rose and said:

"During thirty years of professional life, and over fifteen of being on this school committee, I have met with many extraordinary boys, but you, Benjamin Thatcher, beat all!" and pausing, in order to collect his thoughts, he nodded at the lad, who, calmly returning his salute, replied:

"Thank'ee, doctor; you un'stan' me and the colonel don't."

"You need not thank me, you confounded young monkey!" warmly continued Munson. "I am at a loss to determine whether your reptile arises from astounding impudence or the most dense ignorance. Perhaps you can answer this problem, Mr. Inventor?"

He was really mad, while the boy was as cool as he could be. This made the children titter audibly, noticing which, and raising his right hand, Ben shouted, school-fashion:

"It is neither astonishing impudence nor dense ignorance, therefore it must be natural innocence."

This was a burlesque of the usual replies to the doctor's queries, and was received as such by the laughing scholars.

For a while the committee were dumbfounded, it being very evident that they had their match in inventive Ben. However, it was their own fault, his answers having been given seriously and civilly; but they knew he was too many guns for them, and after consulting in the entry they returned to their seats, and having commanded silence, the doctor gravely remarked to the scholars:

"When I was a boy I was accounted the most polite lad in the town. Now, Benjamin Thatcher is either willfully saucy or deficient in common sense. I'm afraid it is the latter!"

"Put that to the school, doctor!" indignantly observed Ben, who naturally disliked being termed a fool.

"I'll put you in the lock-up if you don't shut up!" savagely retorted Munson. "Another word and I'll cane you myself!"

Thatcher's face was a study, as he turned to his schoolmates and made a comical gesture of disbelief in the committeeman's ability to do what he had threatened—caning, by this act, another outburst of laughter on the part of the young folks.

Suddenly, as though acting from one impulse, the three committeemen sprang to their feet, grasped Ben by the collar, raised him from the ground, conveyed the lad outside and sent him on to the gravel pathway before the door, after which the doctor shook his fist at him and observed, in a tremulous voice:

"You young rascal! You're permanently expelled!"

"Yes, you rascal, you're permanently expelled!" echoed Brightman.

"You dare ever put your foot inside this schoolhouse door again!" gasped Colonel Piper.

"Hah!" cheered the scholars, craning their necks round at the side-windows.

Ben Rose, and, having quietly demanded his books, which were thrown at him by Piper, said:

"See here; you'll be very sorry for this, and the day will come when you'll tell me so. I've only asked for my rights, but, because I've got inventive genius, you've boosted me out of school. Never mind," here he raised his voice; "I can say *one* thing—*it took the entire committee to hists me!*" then, shouldering his volumes, went whistling homeward.

CHAPTER IX.

BEN TRIES THE TRADE OF BUTCHER, WITH CERTAIN RESULTS.

WHEN Ben told his relatives what the committee had done, both Aunt Polly and Uncle John pronounced it to be an outrage.

"I don't quite agree with you," he said, as he calmly watched their angry features. "I'pears to me I'm easy, and yet I don't know it. Guess I'll try a trade. Lemme see—I ought to learn some business that folks can't do without."

"Butchering!" suggested his uncle.

"Why not go back to the rubber works?" said his aunt.

Ben smiled placidly, and remarked:

"I had all I wanted of that. In a big factory you don't learn enough of the business to be anything better than a human machine. I'll try butchering!" and, having eaten his dinner, he started for the only meat-store in Scrub Oak.

"Hello!" cried Mr. Omer, the man who owned the concern. "What is it, Ben? steak for supper?"

"No!" was the lad's response. "I want to learn your business."

Now, in a small, poverty-stricken place like that, a boy who owned a thousand dollars was "somebody," so Omer, who wanted to borrow his money, was very civil to him.

"Want to learn my trade, eh?" murmured the the man, glancing at him out of the corners of his fat-embedded eyes. "Want to know how to kill and dress steers, calves and hogs, etcetera? Of course you will pay me for such work you?"

"When I know whether I shall like it or not," answered the lad. "Maybe it won't suit me."

"It's an elegant trade," continued Omer, smacking his greasy lips, as though he tasted something nice instead of suet fat, and, regarding the boy still more closely: "It's a business for all time—all time, Jes' so long as there are people in this world there must be butchers to kill and serve meat."

"Some folks are taking to eating vegetables, saying meat is unwholesome," dryly remarked Ben.

"Them's in-sat-ies," gravely responded Omer. "Meat is just as much a necessary article of food as bread. It says so in the Bible."

"Where?" incredulously inquired Ben. "I don't remember ever coming across such a statement. I know it says 'Bread is the staff of life.'"

"You're young yet, Thatcher, and have a deal to learn," evasively replied the man. "Now I tell you what I'll do—you're an orphan?"

"Ye-s," nodded the lad.

"And you have some money?" continued the duther.

"Ye-s," said the boy, "I hev."

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do for you," mysteriously continued Omer, in a low, confidential tone. "I'll take you a month on trial. If you like the trade and behave yourself, you shall put a thousand dollars into my business, on interest, and I'll teach you all I know. You can tell your uncle and aunt what I say, and, if they approve of the idea, you buy a pair of butcher's boots and be at my slaughter-house door by six o'clock to-morrow. If you behave yourself, and get along with me, your fortune is made. Inventing is all very well, bub, but I never knew an inventor who could show dollars with a butcher."

"Perhaps you don't know many of my kind," quickly answered Ben. "We're awful scarce folks."

The man laughed, and, as the boy was making off, called after him:

"See here, my son; you'll have no chance for inventing anything in my business."

"But you I will, though," thought the lad, and, returning home, he told his relatives what he had done.

"Well, you can try it," murmured his Uncle John. "It ain't the trade I should pick out—but please yourself?"

Bright and early the next day Ben started for the killing-shed, where, as last as Omer and his men fixed the animals, the boy cleared up after them and aided the assistant to hoist the carcasses to the cooling-loft on the top of the building; after which labor his back and arms ached terribly.

When the steers were all hoisted he was set to work in the store to turn a sausage-machine, and when that job was over, Omer sent him out with orders, and by noon Ben felt dead beat; however, he stuck to it, cleaned out the stables, emptied the brine in the killing-vat, and wound up the day's work by carrying bones from the store to the killing-shed.

It was rough and hard work, but he saw that within the month he could master most of its details, so did not complain.

On the day, when, having dismissed his hired man, Omer was making Ben hoist the carcasses alone, the lad remarked:

"Why don't you put this wheel up a-top and have a balance-weight, so as to lift the meat without so much labor?"

"How?" demanded his employer. "Does it make your arms and back ache?"

"You try it yourself and see if it don't," was his answer. "Let me kill, and you take a turn here."

"You kill?" contemptuously replied Omer. "A nice mess you'd make of it!"

"I'll pay for the next beast if I can't kill and dress it as quickly as Jobson did," said the boy, referring to his late employer.

The butcher drew forth his watch, and, suspending it from a hook, bade Ben go ahead and fix the animal—a nice, young steer.

At it went the lad, and, to the astonishment of his employer, he completed the task in five minutes quicker than Jobson had done at his best; after which, turning to the man, the boy asked him to hoist the carcass.

Omer was fat and scant of breath, and the day was very warm, so, to Ben's words, "it took it out of him considerably" ere the meat was landed above. Still, he objected to using what he termed "any new-fangled invention"; whereupon the lad vowed if he would not do it he'd quit there and then.

"It won't cost you much," he suggested, as the butcher wiped his perspiring brow. "Just get me a wooden drum. This iron work will do to attach to it as checking-gear, and some of those old iron weights out there," nodding toward the yard, "will answer for balance power."

"Very well," grumbled Omer, who wanted to borrow the boy's money, and thought it best to please him, and the next day Ben was hard at work with a carpenter; the result being a hoisting-wheel with a check-line, operating from below, by which two or more carcasses could be raised, lowered or suspended at any point between the ground and top-floor.

"You're a born inventor," admiringly remarked Omer, as he watched the apparatus adding, "But you'll make more money butchering, my son."

There was a steam planing works next door to the meat-store, and when the boy had perfected the hoist at the slaughter-house, he proposed to his employer to run the sausage-maker by power.

"Nonsense!" grumbled the man. "Use your arms; it's part of the butchering trade to know how to turn a sausage-machine."

Then Ben Thatcher gives up all idea of remaining," thought Omer. "Why, it's as easy as eating. Take off the wheel from the cutter, put a wooden drum in its place, cut a hole in the partition wall, slip your belt through and go ahead. Why, you can take a contract from the butchers at Ballyville to cut all their sausage-meat, and pay for the improvement in a month."

Ben had such a way with him that Omer finally yielded, and the machine was fitted under the lad's supervision, working like a charm, and grinding out sausage-meat at a tremendous rate; when an accident occurred that caused the butcher to wish he had never seen Thatcher.

One Mrs. Loomis, a very wealthy lady, entered the store, and, in ordering some meat, carelessly placed her hand-bag in the open mouth of the steam sausage machine, which was not working; the engineer in the planing factory being engaged at that moment in oiling up.

"Porterhouse steak, mam?" inquired Omer, as the woman old creature sniffed and peeked about the place.

"Yes; a quarter of a pound," she replied, poking her finger into a tray of sausage-meat. "Is this fresh?"

"We make it every half hour," said the astonished man, gaping at her order. "*How* much of this steak did you say?"

"I guess I'll have a quarter of a pound of this here sausage?" she smiled, when "buzz-wuzz" went the engine, and away went her bag—all "crish-crash!" while Ben, who had not noticed her act, tossed a big chunk of meat into the hopper, remarking:

"This is my invention, Mrs. Loomis. Don't it work nice, eh?"

"Oh, my bag!" she moaned. "My bonds! my money!" at the same time rushing toward the apparatus and peeping into the box. "Oh, I'm ruined!"

Saying which, she fainted.

"My land! what's the trouble?" groaned Omer.

Piling on more scrape, so as to keep the machine going, Ben helped the old lady to her feet, and, when she came to her senses, learned the truth.

"Seven hundred dollars in bonds and currency!" she moaned. "Oh, you wretch! where is it? I put my reticule into that hopper, and now where is it?"

"Well," calmly returned the boy, "if you did that I reckon it's converted into Omer's steam sausages! You can have them analyzed, you know."

"Git out of this, you wretch!" roared the butcher, making a rush at him; for, though Mrs. Loomis was a poor customer, she loaned Omer money, on interest, and he was desirous of keeping in with her. "Git out of this, or I'll break every bone in your body!"

Whereupon, as Ben did not stir, he went for him again, chasing the laughing inventor out of the store, down the street, and into the slaughter-house; catching him as they reached the latter place.

Omer was foaming with rage, and, to use his own words, "meant to take his loss out of Thatcher's hide," while the boy was, in truth, no match for the burly man.

As the latter struck him a savage "ding" on the head, Ben smartly slipped the hook of the carcass-hoist into his assailant's belt, and, jerking the check, locked him half-way between the floors, where he permitted him to hang until he cooled off.

CHAPTER X.

BLACKSMITH BEN AND THE MULES.

WHILE Mr. Omer was hanging by his belt from the hook of the hoist the following conversation ensued between him and Ben:

"Say, boy, let me down?"

"I don't want to have my head punched and my inventions abused," calmly answered the lad, collecting his boots and spare clothing.

"But I ain't comfortable," growled Omer. "Confound your inventions; you've got me into a nice hobble."

"Call that a hobble?" sniggered the boy, glancing up, as he proceeded to whittle a skewer; "I don't think much of your trade, anyhow. I ain't going to stay. Good-morning! I'll make you a present of my inventions," with which he coolly walked off, and, reaching the store, sent some one to release the butcher, then took his way homeward.

Omer was duly lowered, and at first vowed to do dreadful things to his late assistant, while Mrs. Loomis, who was positively rolling in wealth, not wishing folks to know exactly how much she had lost, wisely held her tongue, and receiving the sausage as a present, did her best to recover some portion of her treasure. But the machine had ground it into food, so, miser-like, she cooked and ate it. However, Ben related the joke, and his latest invention was a source of much merriment to everybody in Scrub Oak.

How much did she have in that old bag of hers?" asked Fanny, when he, in his dry fashion, related how the machine had chewed it up.

"Well," chuckled the boy, "she said seven hundred dollars in bonds and currency, and the sausage did look rather papery."

"Oh, Ben!" remarked Fan. "She turned her only daughter out of doors, and let her die in the hospital, because she married a poor man;" adding, "he was an inventor, too, Ben."

"Was he?" grinned Ben. "Well, you bet he never invented anything that made the old critter so much as my improved sausage-maker."

"What are you going to do next?" she inquired. "I was down to Mr. Cooper's this morning, and he asked me if you would like to learn the shoe trade. I'm a relation of his, and he's a nice man."

"There ain't many real trades to pick from now; it's mostly tending machines," he said. "I tell you what, Fan, I'm going to learn to be a blacksmith, and when I've mastered that I'll tackle a machine-shop. Blacksmithing is the foundation of all mechanics, and I mean to begin at the bottom of the ladder. You know old Perkins? well, he's a smart man at his trade, and can do anything."

"Good idea!" nodded the girl, and after assisting her to master the lessons for the next day he went indoors and told his relatives of his resolve.

Uncle John accompanied him to the smith's house, and they found Perkins smoking his evening pipe.

He was a spare, withered, dry little man, with eyes that resembled those of a ferret—hot and twinkling—but he knew his business, and liked Ben first-rate.

"You'll have to blow the bellows," grimly remarked Perkins, as he winked and blinked at the boy. "It will puzzle you to invent anything to work them without expense."

"You can't puzzle Ben," admiringly observed the boy's uncle. "I think you and he will agree up-top."

"Can I try my hand at any little improvements?" asked Ben. "You see, I wasn't able to do much at Omer's beyond the hoist and the sausage-machine."

"You can invent anything you like out of work hours," was the old man's grim reply. "I admire a boy with ideas."

"He's chock full of 'em," whispered Mr. Wilkins. "He's bilin' over with them!"

"Well," rejoined Perkins, relighting his pipe, "he can try some of them in my forge; I won't charge him any thing for coal or rent, but he must pay for all the iron he uses."

"Hah!" cried Ben, as they quitted the house, and before the end of that week he was steadily at work in the forge.

As may be imagined, he soon contrived a motive power to work the bellows, which he accomplished by using a stream of water that for years had flown uselessly beneath the building. This left him free to learn how to forge iron, shoe horses and oxen, and make handles and one odd job sent to a neighboring smithy, while Perkins said he was the smartest boy he had ever known.

One noon, during the old man's absence, London entered the place, leading a vicious-looking mule, which he said must be shod right away, as his father wanted the animal to team sand.

Now, every one else being at dinner, there was no one but Joe Briggs to aid the young smith in throwing and securing the animal, and the young mischief would have died before asking the Cockney to help him.

"Spose you are afraid to tackle this job, eh?" jeeringly inquired London, who was delighted to give Ben something he thought he could not do.

"I'm not afraid, so," dryly answered our young friend. "I never allow a foreigner to whip me at anything. Guess I can invent something to fix it."

"Bet you ten dollars you'll get kicked into kindling if you try your inventions on Sally," was the grinning fellow's retort. "It took fifteen men to throw and hold her last time she was shod."

"You don't tell me!" was Ben's unmoved reply.

"I do!" exultingly nodded London. "I knowed you was all alone, so I asked pa to let me bring Sally."

"Named after your sister, eh?" inquired the other, dodging out of the way of the animal's kick. "She's like your Sarah."

This made London mad, so he growled:

"No, she ain't, neither; she's named for grandmother."

"All in the family," chuckled Ben.

"You're afraid to shoe her, eh?" snarled Briggs.

"I ain't said so," calmly retorted the boy.

As he spoke people began to move about, the dinner-hour being over, and soon a crowd assembled round the smith's shop, London's father making one of the number and Ben's uncle another.

"I told you he'd be afraid to tackle Sally!" shouted Joe to his parent.

"I never said so," was the young inventor's reply. "How many mules have you, Mr. Briggs?"

"Five, besides this one," answered the man.

"Fetch 'em along," coolly remarked Ben. "Me and the boss will shoe them all, without help, by dusk."

"I'll bet you ten dollars on each you don't," sneered the man. "You may invent a dusting-machine, but you'll never fix any contrivance to stop a mule from kicking."

"I'm on," said the lad, smiling in a peculiar manner. "You fetch along your mules and bills."

"See here!" put in his uncle. "I'm not going to allow you to fool your money away. You know very well it isn't right to gamble."

"That's so," murmured Ben, scratching his chin. "I don't approve of it, either, but as I can do what I say, you fetch the stamps, uncle, and my winnings shall go to help that widow woman who has the crowd of children to keep."

"Hah!" shouted the crowd. "Well done, Inventive Ben!"

"I don't like to risk it," continued his relative. "Here comes Mr. Perkins."

And in another moment the old fellow entered the shop.

"Well," he drawled, as he surveyed the mob, "what is it?"

Thatcher has agreed that you and he shall, unaided, shoe my six mules," said Briggs.

"Have you?" demanded the smith, glancing at the boy.

"Yes, sir," said Ben. "I said we could. You back me, sir."

"Are they all like that critter?" asked the old man, indicating Sally.

"Wuss!" replied the Englishmen. "The others bites!"

"And kicks like forty!" said London. "He's bet father sixty dollars you'll do it, and now's he afraid."

"Benjamin," slowly observed Perkins, "draw your bet. I'll risk the money, but it isn't proper for a boy like you to lay wagers."

With which he turned to the assemblage and remarked:

"'Pon my word! I don't know how he'll fix it, but he's jes' as smart as a rat, so I'll put up for him, an' if we win he shall have the money."

"Hah!" again roared the crowd, while the young inventor quitted the shop and walked briskly toward the main street, leaving Briggs to fetch the rest of the mules.

"How's he going to fix it?" queried the lad's uncle of Perkins, as the smith sorted out six sets of mule's shoes.

"I'll leave it all to him," dryly responded the old man. "When he says he'll do a thing, you bet he will."

"But you will be kicked all to bits!" said one.

"You won't shoe the first mew-el!" remarked another.

"Bet you Sally will hoist you into the middle of next week!" cried a third. "Whoa, Sally!" and the mule once more lashed out in a very savage manner.

In a short time Briggs and his boy returned with the five other animals; seeing which the assemblage set up a roar, and bade the smith give up attempting to shoe them without a crowd of helpers.

"You're crazy, Perkins!" observed the doctor, who had come over to witness the fun.

"Am I?" dryly retorted the man, as, shading his eyes with his hand, he glanced down the street for his assistant. "Maybe I am, but you don't know Inventive Ben as well as I do."

"I'll wait and be on hand to hold the inquest," jokingly continued Munson. "I shall advise the jury to return a verdict of suicide."

"Hello!" cried Ben, entering the smithy by a rear door, and hiding something behind the forge. "Now you wine men get out and give us room while we shoe Sally and the rest of the Briggs family."

Then, when the shop was cleared of all but his employer and himself, he waited until London's father had put up his money, after which he, addressing the grinning crowd, quietly remarked:

"Now we will pro-ceed to use Inventive Ben's patent mule-quieter," the details of which will be found in the next chapter.

[To be continued.]

"Inventive Ben" was commenced in No. 661.

NO JOKE AT ALL.

I SUPPOSE it was not right of me to do it, but you see Bess does teel so big! She is only a girl, any way, and three years younger than I am; but to see her order me round, you'd think she was the great Mogul—girl, I mean. And she keeps her dresses so clean, and her hair never gets out of order—never; and she said I took the cry out of her big baby, just because I cut it open to see what made the noise, and sewed it up again as good as new. Brother Jack said it was "scientific research," and I mustn't be scolded; but of course you can't expect a girl to know anything about scientifics.

She feeds her kittens so much that they get the dyspepsia and die, and then she thinks I poisoned them—the prettiest one she ever had got lung by his blue ribbons to a spike; but whether its dyspepsia, or fits, or hanging, I am always to blame!

I happened to see the valentine in a window, and I thought in a minute what a stunner it would be for Bess. She was the Schoolroom Belle," and she looked just like Bess for all the world; hair all banged and curled, a silly little frill around her neck, an awfully big sash, and her hat hanging away off her head. I spent the last twopence I had in the world for it, and carried it to Johnny Morrison for him to direct the envelope, because Bess would know my writing—nobody else ever did write so awfully bad as I do. Johnny is three years older than I am, and the cleverest fellow you ever saw; he minute he saw the valentine he wanted to write some poetry on it. He is a splendid poet, and he wrote these verses—made them up himself! But I ought to tell you, first, that Bess always cries like a good fellow when she has to sew, and that if she "can't bear boys," as she always says, she does

like to play with Johnny Green, a little fellow just her age, that lives next door. Here are the verses:

"This is the belle of Miss Proctor's school,
As you may see if you're not a fool;
Her hair does curl so awfully tight,
Her nose turns up such an awful sight,
Oh, she thinks she is so pretty!

"She wears a gold chain around her neck;
Her dresses are white—without a speck;
She has beautiful shooses,
And her kid gloves she never loses;
Oh, she thinks she is so charming!

"And this little belle, who cannot sew,
She has an elegant little beau;
His name is dear little Johnny Green;
Walking with her he is often seen.
Oh, isn't he a darling!

"He gives her apples so nice and red;
He gives her candy and gingerbread;
He plays for her on his little drum,
And he makes her think he is 'some-
On e'—isn't it too silly!"

Now, if you don't call that poetry, I don't know what you do call poetry. Perhaps it wasn't just the thing for a fellow to send to his sister, for girls cannot appreciate fun; but I didn't think Bess was going to be such a goose as to put her two fists into her two eyes and howl when she got it. But that was what she did do; and I was pretty frightened, for they make a baby of her at home, and get awfully cross with a fellow when he teases her. But she thought Jack, our big brother, sent it. She said "nobody but Jack could make such beautiful poetry. It was beautiful, if it was mean and horrid;" and she wanted me to help her to "pay" Jack.

I saw there was fun ahead, and I'm not the kind of fellow that hangs back when there's fun. So I said I would help her. Maybe it wasn't just right to let her think Jack sent it when I did; but, of course, I wasn't going to tell her. And such a good joke on Jack popped into my head right away, and Jack has played tricks enough on me, besides always calling me "little shaver," and "small boy," and such names that a fellow can't stand always. And I never got a single joke on Jack.

"Bess," said I, "you know Nelly Pritchard?"

"Yes; she is a beautiful young lady," said Bess. "She always gives me candy. She likes me better than any of the girls."

"Pooh! she only gives you candy because Jack is your brother," said I. "Listen, Bess, and I'll tell you an awful secret—she's in love with our Jack!"

"Like Beauty and the Beast," said Bess, with her eyes as round as marbles.

That was a good one on Jack, now, wasn't it? You would think so if you know how handsome he thinks he is, and how many neckties he tries on before he finds one that suits his complexion!

"No, not just like Beauty and the Beast, because Jack isn't in love with her. I heard him say, the other day, that he was never going to be married, for the girls were all deceitful and heartless, and he hates them all!"

"That is very wicked of Jack to hate people," said Bess.

"Jack is a man; and a man may do what he likes, you little goose. But I'll tell you how we'll pay Jack. We'll make him marry Nelly Pritchard."

You ought to have seen Bess's eyes stick out at that. It did sound pretty big, to be sure; and I don't suppose I should ever have been smart enough to think how to do it myself; but I read about such a thing in a book.

"Is it very bad to marry somebody that you don't want to? Because I shouldn't want to hurt Jack's feelings very much."

Bess is such a soft-hearted little goose.

"Well, it isn't very nice, at first; but they get over it soon, and love 'em like anything." (You see, a fellow with a taste for reading, like me, learns a great deal.) "Now, I'll tell you how we'll do it. We'll write a letter to Nelly Pritchard, a real love-letter, with an offer in it, and pretend it comes from Jack—sign Jack's name to it. Then, of course, she'll answer it, and say Yes, and Jack will get her letter, and, of course, he can't tell her it was all a mistake and he won't have her!"

"But what if we should be found out?"

That was just like a girl for all the world!

"But we won't get found out," said I; "and he will have to marry her, and we'll go to the wedding, and you'll have new white kid slippers, and there'll be ice-cream, and oh, such lots of wedding-cakes!"

"Let's write it this minute!" said Bess, jumping and clapping her hands.

It was a good deal of work to compose that letter, though we borrowed the "Polite Letter-Writer" from Maggie, the seamstress. But I thought it was a regular stunner when it was done.

"Respected miss; darling Nelly"—["The Polite Letter-Writer" said you must begin a love-letter "respected miss," and Bess would have it so, but I put in the "darling Nelly" out of my own head.]

THE U-TAIL-ITY OF A DOG.

—"I write these few lines to take the liberty to tell you that I love you till death. You must have seen how vexed it makes me for you to walk with Ned Wilkins. I feel that you are my soul's true mate, and I always wear blue neckties because I know it is your favorite color, and I wear such little bows that my curls are growing fearful fast, and my heart beats responsive to yours. If you do not consent to be my wife, I will instantly blow out my brains with a double-barreled revolver. And so remain, your obedient servant to command.

"JOHN H. DALE."

I carried it to Johnny Morrison to copy, because he can write better than I; and I carried a bit of Jack's handwriting, so that he could make it look as much like that as possible; because you know Jack might have written her notes when he used to go with her so much a year ago. Johnny Morrison thinks he knows everything, and he didn't like the letter. He said she would know Jack didn't write it; so I let him do it over to suit himself; and I can't say that he didn't make it sound more like Jack, and he sat up all night trying to make the writing look like Jack's.

Well, I'm not a coward; out after that letter was gone I was scared. I would have given my new velocipede to get it back. I wouldn't advise any fellow to try a trick like that; because he won't feel very comfortable afterward. I don't believe it would turn out as well as ours did every time, either.

Jack got a letter when the postman came the very next morning, in a lady's handwriting, and with a "P" on the seal. I took my hat and got out of the house as fast as I could. I stopped at the first corner, and looked back at the house, with an awful feeling that I must have been found out, and somebody was coming to gobble me up. It wasn't long before I saw Jack rush out of the house, as if he were a fire company, and down to the Pritchards' house. They lived in the same street.

I had to go to school, and I didn't see Jack again till night. Just as soon as I heard his latch-key in the hall-door, I started to go out by the area door. I didn't care much about seeing him; but he reached over the railing and grabbed me by the collar.

"Tom, you little beggar"—that is all the manners he has got—"have you and John Morrison been playing any tricks lately?"

I shook in my shoes, I can tell you.

"I don't think you are smart enough to write that letter yourself, but I think you put John Morrison up to it. I happen to know his writing, besides the "M" on the envelope. Well, I wouldn't advise you to take up that business as a regular thing, Tom; it would be very likely to get you into trouble; but I must own that you did me the best turn I ever had done me in my life. You see, Tom"—and Jack got as red as could be, and looked awfully spoony—"I wanted to ask her that question long ago, but she had two or three rich fellows round her, and she is a little given to flirting, and I made up my mind that it was of no use. But she said yes; and I have you and Johnny Morrison to thank."

"I wouldn't have done it, only Bess wanted to pay you for sending that valentine. I sent it, but you needn't tell her," I stammered.

"Never!" said Jack. "And, Tom, if you want a little extra change, you'll know where to come for it."

But it was no joke, after all, you see. You never can get a joke on Jack.

THE U-TAIL-ITY OF A DOG.

THE boys of Virginia City, Nev., are thoroughly infused with the spirit of enterprise that is enabling older heads to make the "desert blossom as the rose." When natural circumstances do not favor the prosecution of their diversions, necessity, that ever-sufficient mother, brings to the emergency the very idea required. Kite-flying is capital sport anywhere, but in Virginia City it is unusually popular. Of course scientific lads know just what condition of air and force of wind are necessary for a jolly go. The same deep knowledge, however, is not above suggesting a means of raising a breeze, as indicated in the engraving. When the days are calm, and the boys spoiling for the want of fun, dogs are impressed into the service. The kite-strings are tied to the dogs' tails, and if the day is a "dead calm," a couple of tin cups or any convenient rattle are affixed, and the animal set loose. One thing is certain, as long as the dogs run the kites will soar like birds.

MISS BELLA SPRAGUE'S ADVENTURE.

MISS BELLA SPRAGUE'S ADVENTURE.

A REMARKABLE exhibition of presence of mind was made by Miss Bella Sprague, of North Bridgewater, Mass. She was taking her usual carriage ride, at the cool of the day, and had driven nearly to the village of Randolph in the adjoining county, when two men sprang from the side of the road. One immediately seized the horse by the head, when Miss Sprague gave the animal a blow of the whip and he sprang forward, sending the rascal prostrate to the ground. The companion of the fallen man made a dash for the carriage, but the lady, with perfect coolness, turned and "tipped" his face with her whip with a strength that caused him to desist. She arrived home in safety, and, like a true heroine, made no boast of her adventure.

A PIG IN A CHURCH STEEPLE.

IN a small town in the northern part of this State the strange spectacle was, on a recent Sunday morning, observed of a butchered hog suspended by its hind-legs from the church steeple. A crowd collected to view the remains, and their inquiries resulted in the confession of two or three prankish Sunday school boys. One of the brethren, who had made himself obnoxious to these lads, had killed his hog, and left it out over night to cool. The boys thought it a fine opportunity to hoist the pork to the top of the steeple, and accordingly did so. After the fun was over they cheerfully helped the man to haul his hog down, and apologized for their irregular conduct.

MME. ANDERSON'S PLUCKY WALK.

MADAME ANDERSON completed her extraordinary task of walking 2,700 quarter-miles in that number of quarter-hours in Mozart Hall, Brooklyn, at ten o'clock on the evening of January 13th, having started on the track at eight o'clock on the evening of December 16th. Her last quarter-mile was made in 2:37½, the quickest time of the entire walk. Little attention was attracted at first by her plucky intention, as few persons but herself and husband believed she could maintain her walk for more than a week. As she trudged on, however, day after day and week after week, the crowd of spectators increased, so that on the night of the finish, the hall, built to accommodate but 800 people, was packed with 2,000, while a like number remained outside, only restrained from attempting to enter by the determined action of the police.

Throughout the long tramp Madame Anderson remained cheerful, chatty and physically well. She ate frequently, and drank largely of port wine and moderately of champagne. She fell into a sound sleep almost the moment her head touched her pillow, and was aroused readily at the end of her very brief rests. For a few moments she would appear somewhat dazed, but she forced wakefulness either by playing on a piano or singing, in which accomplishments she is quite proficient. Frequently in making her rounds at night she would amuse herself by blacking the faces or noses of spectators close to the track, who had become fatigued watching her, and dropped off into sound sleep. Her husband, trainer and physicians kept uninterrupted watch over her, and shared in the wonderment of thousands of spectators at the exhibition of her great endurance.

The wagers on this performance were many and heavy, those laid during the last days having been for very considerable sums, and fears were entertained, during the closing hours of the walk, by her friends, that foul play might be attempted, to prevent the madame from accomplishing her task. That is one reason why one of her intimates walked every quarter with her for the last two days. On Monday afternoon this anxiety was redoubled by the senseless canard published in a Brooklyn paper, to the effect that bouquets drugged with chloroform had been presented to the madame. She herself testified that this story was utterly without foundation; nevertheless, she was not allowed to handle any of the numerous bouquets and baskets of flowers presented to her in the evening, but they were taken in charge by those walking with her. Her escort was also increased, and from seven o'clock until the finish one man walked in front of her, one behind, and one beside her, over every lap, while others stationed every few yards kept the track clear.

During the entire evening Madame Anderson was sustained by the most intense and scarcely to be suppressed excitement. At times she walked at a tremendous pace, almost running around the track, with pale face and clinched teeth. At the close of the next to the last quarter she sprang from the track to the platform, and mounting the elevated perch of the scorers, seated herself in a chair.

Hushing the cheers and yells with which she was greeted, she announced that she wished to sing a farewell song. Amid the silence that followed she sang, but with considerable effort, three verses of a song entitled "Nil Desperandum." The bell rung just as she finished, she hurried down and into the dressing-room amid tremendous applause. As three minutes later the bell rang again, calling her to the track for the last time, she darted from the little doorway before its sound had ceased, and started off at a terrific pace, determined to beat 2:40, the best recorded time made by one of her male friends some days before. The band tried to play "Don't Get Weary," but its loudest discords were drowned by the deafening cheers and yells that were kept up during the next three minutes. The women yelled with the men, and became frantic in their excitement. The air was white with the fluttering of handkerchiefs, and the scene presented has seldom been equaled in Brooklyn. As the bell was rung for the last time, announcing that but one mere lap remained to be walked, the plucky woman increased her speed with a tremendous effort, and came flying down the homestretch with a face absolutely devoid of color, eyes fixed and teeth clinched. The pace was a run rather than a walk, and as she finished she was lifted into a chair on the platform in the last stages of exhaustion. The frenzied cheering was hushed for a moment, as the scorer announced that the quarter was the fastest of the entire walk, and had been made in 2:37½, and then it was renewed, louder, if possible, than before. At the close she tendered her thanks to the spectators in a brief biographical speech, and was then carefully wrapped in blankets and driven away for a well-earned resting spell.

THE JUDGE'S DAUGHTER.

A Tale of the Rio Grande Border.

By COL. CHRIS. FORREST,

Author of "Wild-Horse Jim," "Leatherskin," "Pert Martin," etc., etc.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE battered and stricken remnants of De Castro's band could muster no heart or courage for any greater activity than was exhibited in a timid effort to ascertain the extent of their losses, battle-lashly wipe the foam-flakes here and there, and await in gloomy despondency for the increasing lights of dawn that now began to brighten over the hilltops. Anything like a sortie was utterly out of the question, although they were reasonably sure that the Commanche part of their perfidy at least was being driven further and further away from them down the valley. Nor had the cunningest and most experienced horse-thief among them any too clear an idea precisely by whom their red assailants had been so suddenly and unexpectedly smitten and discomfited.

The latter, indeed, had by this time acquired reasonably accurate information on that all-important subject. Once out of the narrow inclosure within the walls, and away from the revealing light of the fires they themselves had kindled, San-ta-Kah's wrathful heroes were less exposed to the deadly operation of the rifles, nor were so very many of these now at work.

The difficulty was, so far as they were concerned, that they could not make any respectable guess as to the real numbers opposed to them. Two or three over-daring squads, who made the experiment of trying to find out, paid so dearly for all they learned that the rest were very much disposed to "club" their remaining strength, and make the best of their way toward the hills from which they had so triumphantly looked down a few short hours before.

It was beginning to be less of a puzzle to the red-skinned leader, "What had become of Gray Dog and his party?" and a good deal more of a question whether he himself would ever succeed in reaching the fords of the Rio Grande. His horses were tagged and weary, his warriors were dispirited, and not much more than half of them were left, counting the wounded and those on foot, and even the prestige of his own skill and "luck" as a leader had been knocked away from under him.

There was nothing for it—barring the hope, which could not possibly be taken away from a true Comanche, of stealing fresh quadrupeds on the way home—left to sustain the sinking hearts of the red raiders. It was something of a comfort, to be sure, that they had not been beaten by the Mexican blouse; for, according to prairie notions, a species of respectability attached to the fact that their regular and accustomed opponents had caused the mischief.

A PIG IN A CHURCH STEEPLE.

MADAME ANDERSON'S PLUCKY WALK.—CHALKING FACES OF SLEEPING VISITORS.

They had brought away a very goodly number of scalps to help them hold up their heads, and now, after a mile or two of harassed and disastrous retreat, the pursuit itself began to slacken.

Wolf-that-Rides was no fool, and he had no notion of waiting until the dawn of day should show his enemies how fine an opportunity was left them of striking back upon his inferior numbers, and the score or so of rangers who accompanied him were very much of his way of thinking, especially as some of them were falling short of ammunition.

The last consideration, in fact, was what carried the day, and "sun-up" saw the Lipan chief and his white friends very leisurely and lazily working their way back to the scene of their exploits of the night.

When they arrived in front of the hacienda, indeed, the prospect before them was well worth coming back to look at. The ancient stronghold of the border thieves and raiders was pretty effectually shorn of what shabby glory it may have possessed the day before.

The fire had burned itself out for want of any great amount of fuel, but the gaps in the wall and the shattered front of the main building had their own story to tell, not less than the ghastly human relics which had been collected and arranged in the open space near the gates.

Red men, and yellow men, and white men—there were all that was left of them; but their very number was a voucher that a most valuable lesson had been taught to a part, at least, of the scourges of the Rio Grande frontier.

Apart from the rest, still wearing the gaudy uniform of a Mexican ranchero general, on a couch that had been brought from the upper chamber, where Rose Turney had so strangely fallen asleep, reposed one form which even in death was treated with something of respect, if not of honor, by the rude denizens of the De Castro hacienda.

The blood had been washed from the pale and silent face, and the chiseled lips were quiet now, for the first time in many a long and passion-worn year of lawless violence and wild adventure, while the round blue mark between the closed eyes gave a singularly stern and forbidding expression to the countenance of the dead leader.

"He was a remarkable man," said one of a group that stood by the couch; "but the frontier is well rid of him."

"You bet it is, Captain Guy," responded the deep voice of Lot Narrows. "He was about as big a devil as ever stole a hoss."

"By-the-way, Lot," interrupted Guy, "did you count the drove? How many are there missing?"

"Not more'n half a dozen, I'd say," returned Lot. "De Castro was a pretty keerful drover. Anyhow, we've got nigh on to two hundred head of mustangs, that's fresh enough to mount the men with. We kin make pretty good time, 'cept we've got to be easy on the wounded. I'm havin' the litters rigged in Mexican fashion, so we kin start right arter breakfast."

"Bury our own men, then," returned Guy. "The Mexicans can take care of all the rest. I must go and look out for our friend the French count."

"Guy," here suddenly broke in a voice from a little squad, which had approached unnoticed. "Rose and I want a look at him, strange as it may seem, and so does Mademoiselle de Serray."

Guy drew back and raised his hat, without speaking, and in a moment it was evident that the two ladies had more than satisfied their not unaccountable curiosity.

One glance at the face of the dead bandit, and another at the terrible evidences around them of the murderous nature of the struggles in which their friends had been engaged, and both Rose and Nina were glad enough to turn shudderingly away.

Charley Turney whispered a word to Guy as they did so, and the latter stepped to the side of Rose. It may have been a quiver of Nina de Serray's red lips, but something seemed to call on Charley for an explanation.

"I have asked him to break to her the news of our father's death. He can do it better than anybody else. He is a splendid fellow."

"He is, indeed," said Nina, with an outburst of true generosity; "but I am so sorry for Leon."

"Leon!" exclaimed Charley. "Why, Dan and his wife tell me he is out of danger. We must take him home with us and get him well. I've had a litter made to move him on."

Stupid fellow! But Nina was glad of his failure to comprehend the nature of her sorrow for her brother. The poison of De Castro's stiletto might, indeed, be counteracted, but she was wondering and aching over the question as to how deeply poor Leon might have been penetrated with a very different kind of "poison."

Meantime, Rose had stepped slowly away by the side of her brother's tall friend, and it had seemed absolutely impossible for her to utter a word beyond a barren remark or so about the extreme beauty of the sunrise.

And Guy, too, on his part, had spoken of the morning, and of the fight, and the dead ranchero general, and the long journey before them, and at last he mustered all his courage and added:

"But I have one very sad thing to tell you, Miss Turney!"

"Why not Rose?" she asked, in a low, firm voice. "Have you not known me from childhood?"

"Rose, then—thank you for that—I have promised Charlie to tell you you will not find your father when you return home," said the young man, almost falteringly.

"I know it, and yet I do not know it," sadly responded Rose.

"You know it?" said Guy.

"Some things I heard said around me while I was trying to wake up

MADAME ANDERSON'S PLUCKY WALK.—MADAME ANDERSON IN HER WALKING COSTUME.

MADAME ANDERSON'S PLUCKY WALK.—SINGING HER LAST SONG.

came back to me this morning, and I asked Pomp. So I have been told about it; and yet it seems like part of a dream. It is all a dream to me yet, and I do not seem to feel any reality in it. Perhaps it will come to me by degrees; but just now it is too dreadful, and I cannot make it seem true."

She spoke calmly and steadily, and Guy could but acknowledge that it was very natural it should be so. Nor could he, on the other hand, refrain from replying with:

"Is it all a dream—all? Rose, is there nothing true and real in it all? I had hoped one thing was true."

Guy's voice was tremulous, in spite of its deep music; but, whether she understood him or not, Rose answered only:

"And what is that, Guy?"

"It seemed to me as if you had forgiven me," murmured the ranger captain.

"I never had anything to forgive," said Rose. "I never blamed you for going away; and yet, Joe Herrick must have stolen the ring. I could never guess how you came to find it and send it back to me."

"Poor fellow," said Guy. "He paid dearly for his folly; but I found the ring in the grass beside him on the spot where you were captured. Then when I sent it back to you, by India-rubber Dan, I thought you would understand me, and when I saw it on your hand—"

"You knew it had never left by any good will of mine, did you not?" feverishly responded Rose. "You could not think I would put it on again, if I had been so wicked as to give it away?"

And as she spoke the hand which wore the ruby token was raised, and the soft gray eyes which had been gazing on it were full of tears as they turned pleadingly to those of Guy Marriner.

They were passing, at that moment, between two bushy masses of tropical bloom and foliage which concealed them perfectly from any impertinent observation, and what could the ranger captain do but just what he did?

One swift, light kiss, on hand and ring, another, longer and deeper, on the lips that asked the question so earnestly, and then the tears, too, were kissed away.

"Is it not real?" exclaimed Guy.

"Oh, Guy," whispered Rose. "And yet it seems a good deal like a dream, too. Ever since the ring came I felt sure you would come, too, and rescue me. I do not wish to wake up to everything, just yet. It seems so horrible!"

No wonder, after those days of trial and suffering and peril, no wonder poor Rose dreaded to look at the sad realities of her bereavement all at once in the face.

Perhaps, too, she had not yet entirely recovered, from the effects of the narcotic. At all events, Guy Marriner was satisfied, feeling sure that the heart of his fair friend could not be less than true to her father's memory when it had been so true to him.

And now, for they still walked on, they found themselves once more approaching the foot of the old Aztec pyramid, and just in advance of them were Charley Turney and Nina de Serray. These two had been talking, and not altogether of themselves.

"Your friend and your sister have met before?" Nina had asked.

"They were almost brought up together," Charlie had replied. "I love him like a brother."

"Will he ever be one?" sprang to the lips of Nina.

"I hope so. I think so," said he, with frank simplicity. "There was a misunderstanding once, but that is all over now, of course."

"Thank you," said Nina. "I am glad to know that. "But where shall I take my poor brother?"

"To my own home, and nowhere else," said Charlie, energetically. "He has well earned all we can give him. Guy and Rose and I will help you nurse him, and he will be once more free to go and come, without any danger of Mexican assassins."

MADAME ANDERSON'S PLUCKY WALK.—FINISHING THE LAST QUARTER-MILE IN 2:37¾.

MADAME ANDERSON'S PLUCKY WALK.—THE PEDESTRIENNE BORNE AWAY IN BLANKETS AT THE CLOSE.

Nina was silent, for a moment, and then, as she saw who were approaching, behind them, she suddenly quickened her pace, Charlie followed and aided her light footsteps up the terraces of the pyramid.

The wounded men had either clambered down or been removed; and the only tenants of the little level were Pomp, the cook, and Leon de Serray, with Dan and his adorable Belinda.

"Tsar, mister," the latter was remarking to her patient, "it wasn't anything but common snake-pison, and I never seed a feller come out of it quicker nor livelier. If it wasn't for that thar clip on yer skelp you'd be fit to ride inside the day. How do you seem to think you feel?"

"Nina!" exclaimed Leon, as the latter now appeared. "My dear sister! It's almost too good to be true. I think I shall get well now, and we are free! Think of that! No more of this horrid robber-life, and no more daily peril for you or me!"

"And you are to come home with Rose and Guy and me!" said Charlie, eagerly. "We will make a new man of you in less than no time!"

And to Nina's astonishment, her brother heartily responded to the invitation so sincerely and earnestly given, only adding a strong wish that he were able to mount his horse.

Even a greater surprise was in store for her, a few minutes later, when Guy and Rose came to join in the congratulations on Leon's improved condition, for Dan's remarkable wife drew her gently to one side and whispered:

"I understand. I know what's been a-workin' of ye. Don't be a bit afeard. One pison alters kills another. I've had to make Dan lall in love with me 'over and over every time he let 'em snake bite him. It's mostly the same way with whisky on some fellers. If you make a haul of Charlie Turney, don't you ever let him drink. It's just clean death on love. I understand pison, I do, and I'll go my head on it yer brother's cured of both bites."

Whether or not Dan's philosophy were chemically and psychologically correct, Leon seemed to succeed very well in concealing any remains of disappointed feeling which may have troubled him, and, in a few hours more, the whole cavalcade of jaded and weary human beings had taken up their line of march out of the De Castro valley. It was a plucky thing to do, but Guy Marriner was a very unrelenting sort of captain.

Short stages were the best that could be made, but he made as many of them in each twenty-four hours as the condition of the wounded rendered at all practicable.

Perhaps, to at least "two pair" of the returning raiders, both rests and marches were short enough, albeit Rose Turney was now fully awake to her losses as well as her gains; as for her brother, now that Nina's mind was at ease concerning Leon, and she could leave him a good deal to the care and company of India-rubber Dan and his Belinda, why should not the handsome young Texan busy himself with efforts to persuade Leon's sister that there was no reason she should be in any hurry about going back to Spain?

Whether or not he precisely succeeded, the result was the same, for, after the weary marches were over, and the Rio Grande forded, at last, and after a few weeks of rest had fully restored Leon, there was such a double wedding and such a happy lot of "raiders" setting out for a tour, which was to include France and half Europe besides, that the old ranche was left in charge of Lot Narrows, with Pomp, the cook, India-rubber Dan, Belinda, the rangers, and the endless droves of horses, mustangs and long-horned Texan cattle.

THE END.

DASHING DOLORES;

Or,

Chincapin Dick on the Border.

By JOSEPH E. BADGER, Jr.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SWOOP OF THE VULTURE.

RED TOM lost no time in taking the road after once collecting the men assigned him for duty by Dashing Dolores, and before day fairly dawned he was clear of the town and well on his way toward the border.

His original force was lessened by two, and now consisted of ten men besides himself. Those two had fallen in the fight which the landings had broken up, one of them dead with a Texan bullet through his skull, the other badly wounded. His situation was not much more preferable. He had long been "wanted" by the authorities, and with a dozen prices set upon his head, his fate was almost certainly sealed.

While gathering up his allies Red Tom learned that his two enemies had escaped being murdered during the fight in the dark only to fall into the hands of the rancho, at ease on that score. He knew pretty well the kind of justice Texans were likely to receive at the hands of their friends over the border, and felt sure that they would never give him more trouble.

Yet he was resolved to take no unnecessary chances, and pressed toward the border with all the speed of which his animals were capable, scarcely allowing himself time to eat or rest until the Rio Grande was placed behind them.

Knowing that the recent skirmish between the Mexican soldiers and the Texans, under command of Big Tom Stanley, must have stirred up the patrols upon both sides of the river to redoubled activity and watchfulness, he anticipated delay in effecting a crossing, if not other trouble.

For this reason he chose the old, abandoned ford, where we saw Chincapin Dick and his chums cross over with their prisoner and captured stock, timing his advance so as to reach the river in night-time. Though he scarcely dared hope it, he found the passage unguarded, and quickly stood upon Texan soil.

In the little grove of trees surrounding the spring he took his first reasonable rest and meal since leaving Santa Rosa, but improved the opportunity by telling his allies exactly what he contemplated, and the part he expected them to play.

The outlaws were all Mexicans, in blood as in heart, and Red Tom had chosen them with a keen eye to the business he had on hand.

The chance to despoil a Texan would have been inducement enough for them to have taken double the trouble, but when permission was added to plunder, kill and burn, if they felt so inclined, they one and all felt that Red Tom was indeed the prince of leaders.

The night after they crossed the Rio Grande, Red Tom called a halt at the swampy retreat where he lay recruiting after his terrible ride from the Stevens ranche. Here, after supper was eaten, a tedious piece of work was accomplished.

From the motley group of white men the raiders became a painted and bejumped war-party of Kickapoo Indians.

The counterfeit was sufficiently accurate to defy detection unless by a very close inspection, or an unusually heavy shower of rain.

Red Tom had carefully calculated his chances, and decided that there would be too great a risk in traveling any further beneath the light of the sun until after his nefarious work was done. They must be by the little swamp until the next night, then push on to the island in the slough where Uncle Dick met his death, and there await the coming of another night.

There would be some danger of their presence being discovered by some passer-by, but the risk must be run, and would be less dangerous than if they transversed the distance by day. In that case they would almost certainly be discovered, and since the late raid the settlers would be too suspicious to allow them to pass without undergoing a close and satisfactory examination.

His plans once fairly decided upon, Red Tom and his followers took things easy, spending the greater portion of their time in sleep, knowing that, successful or not, the moment their intended blow was struck, there would be no rest for them on that side of the big river.

This schedule was faithfully carried out, and the second night after crossing the Rio Grande saw the Border Vultures settle down upon the little island where Red Tom had met with the roughest experience of his eventful life.

It still lacked several hours of day, and the mad passions which had been growing with each moment that lessened the distance which divided him from his intended victims urged Red Tom to strike his blow for revenge at once, and for a brief space he hesitated whether or no he should not give the word to advance. But, then, prudence bade him bide his time, and not strike his blow until success was fairly assured.

"That will be the surest way," he muttered, as he abandoned the rash idea. "There may be fighting, and that is ticklish work where one is ignorant of the force opposed to him. No, I'll wait till tomorrow night. Then both men and horses will be fresh, and we can find out in the meantime just how the ground lies, how many men Mad Ralph—the devil make his bed!—has with him, where they are quartered at night, and whatever else may be needful. We'll strike our blow early, and be many miles away before there is daylight enough for any of the neighbors to collect and strike our trail."

Still Red Tom was not content to let the hours before day pass unimproved, and leaving his horse behind him, he set out to reconnoitre the ranche and its surroundings.

He might have spared himself this exertion, for all the good he accomplished, for he certainly made no discovery worth the trouble.

All was silent around the buildings, save for an occasional yelp from some prowling dog.

Before the day fairly dawned Red Tom had completed his arrangements.

The horses were secured upon the little island where they could not be seen by men hidden from view. Three men were posted upon as many different sides, where the high ground would afford them a fair view of the surrounding country, with orders to signal the approach of any human being in ample time for those below to arrange for his capture or death, in case of being discovered.

Red Tom reserved the fourth side, or that which overlooked the property of Mad Ralph Stevens, for his own guardianship, and the first gleam of day found him perched in the fork of a tree, peering and noting everything that took place in the little valley beyond with a keen and jealous eye.

Thus the day passed by, and nothing occurred to freshen the Border Vultures. No one passed near enough to their covert to discover their presence, and when the sun sank to rest, Red Tom returned to the island and with grim satisfaction reported the extent of the discoveries he had made during his long and solitary watch.

"Besides Mad Ralph and his boy, there are only three men for us to handle. They are quartered in a little shanty, full two hundred yards from the main building, and if we work it right they will give us but little trouble."

"As soon as they have fairly settled down for the night we will saddle up and ride around to the south corral, where we will hitch our animals. We will divide into two parties, one of which Gaspard will lead, while I manage the other.

"You, Gaspard, will creep up as close as you can to the front of the cabin where the herders sleep. There is only one door, and when the fellows break cover you can shoot them down before they fairly get their eyes open. Mind, don't spare the lead, and don't try to kill, for if you give the rascals half a chance they will make their mark as deep and broad that some of your number will be past praying for. Give your whole attention to those in the cabin. I will answer for those in the main building, and manage it so that your game shall break cover without a suspicion of your ambush."

The desperado then proceeded to instruct his own party in the duty they were to perform, but it is not necessary for us to go further into details, since their actions will speak for themselves, and thus avoid needless repetition.

It was quite ten o'clock before Red Tom deemed it prudent to sally forth from their island retreat, although he was anxious to complete his nefarious work, and turn his head toward the Rio Grande, beyond which alone might he expect anything like safety.

Silently, as though veritable phantoms of the night, the disguised Vultures made their way toward the point where it was resolved to leave their horses in waiting. The southern corral was reached without so much as the yelp of a restless cur to betray them, and after dismounting and securing their animals to the fence, Red Tom bade Gaspard advance with his men, and take up his position before the little cabin in which the hired men slept.

By this time the moon had arisen, and was giving sufficient light for their purpose, and Gaspard felt confident of success as he placed his men in position, not more than twenty yards from the log-cabin. A large log was lying broadside to the entrance, and he, with his men, lay upon their stomachs behind this, resting their firearms upon the convenient breastwork.

As soon as he saw that they were fairly in position, Red Tom singled out one of his own men, and bade him hasten to one of the corrals in which were a number of loose horses, which he was to alarm until their noise should awaken the sleeping men. Naturally, they would hasten to learn what was disturbing the stock, and blindly rush to their death. Red Tom then led his men up to the ranche, placing them upon either side of the door, with orders to rush in and overpower the family the moment the door was opened.

The plan was a cunning one, not a single detail of which was overlooked or neglected, and doubtless would have proven a complete success only for one unforeseen fact, which it was impossible to guard against.

At almost the same instant that Red Tom abandoned his watch on the setting of the sun, one of the three hired men mounted his horse and rode away west, in hopes of knocking over one of a small herd of deer which he had learned were accustomed to spend their nights in a certain prairie "draw," or hollow, filled with tall grass.

Unsuccessful in his hunt, he was returning home, when he caught a glimpse of the Border Vultures against the sky-line, and instantly suspected mischief.

Grown gray in service upon the frontier, the cow-boy cautiously advanced to reconnoitre, never pausing to calculate the danger he might thus be running.

He succeeded in getting near enough to, as he supposed, make out that the party were Indians, and their stealthy movements told him plainly enough that they meant evil to his friends and employer.

That was enough for the stout-hearted Texan, and he resolved to strike the first blow.

Stealing along until he could "rake" the position assumed by Gaspard and his worthies, he paused when barely two score yards away, covered them with his double-barreled shotgun, and sent two heavy charges of buckshot into the ambuscade with deadly effect.

The moment he fired the Texan sprang swiftly aside, and while retreating toward his horse, he yelled aloud, almost splitting his throat:

"Injuns! Injuns! lay close, boys, an' look out for mags! Injuns! Injuns!"

Gaspard himself was slain outright, together with one of his comrades, while two of the others were wounded by the random double shot.

These two, with the one man who had escaped injury, sprang to their feet with yells of surprise and terror, so bewildered that they knew not which way to run. But this indecision did not last long, though it was fatal to one of the wounded men.

The sleeping enemy had been effectually aroused by the double report, and the attentorian warning of their comrade was clearly understood as they sprang out of bed.

Grasping their ever-ready weapons, they were just in time to see the astounded Mexicans break cover and stand revealed by the clear moonlight, in their savage disguise.

One glance was enough, and the two inmates of the cabin opened a rolling fire upon them with their revolvers. One man fell dead—the other two hastily fled to rejoin Red Tom.

"Keep your kiver, boys!" yelled the hunter, as he leaped upon his horse's back. "Thar's more of 'em nearer the ranche. I'll go for 'em—"

The sentence ended in a hollow groan, and the body which fell from the saddle as the terrified horse leaped forward was lifeless clay ere it touched its mother-earth.

The fatal shot was fired by the man whom Red Tom had sent to alarm the corraled horses.

For an instant Red Tom stood like one petrified at this unexpected disarrangement of his carefully laid plans, but then, with a howling curse of furious rage, he rushed forward to the massive shoulders at the door, hoping to effect an entrance before the inmates were fairly aware of their peril. But here, too, he was fated to meet with disappointment.

The heavy door did not even shake before his strong limb, and he rushed to the nearest window, hoping better success with the wooden shutters, seeking to pry them open with his stout knife. But he was given scant time to make the attempt.

A heavy report, a blinding flash, and he reeled backward, leaping

Go read the history of the Minnesota massacre! Enough is shadowed forth there—but subdued as much as possible, for the whole truth would be too revolting even for the historian to record—to explain the undying hatred with which the white borderers regard the redmen. And whenever you meet a pious apologist for the terribly abused "Poor Lo!" you may be sure he is Eastern-born and reared, that he has never met a genuine savage, or ever lived within stroke of their knives and firearms.

For the plain truth, go ask those who live upon the border; let them tell you what they have actually seen with their own eyes, what they have, too many of them, experienced in their own person. Do this, and then raise your pitying voice in a tearful appeal for the poor, cheated, much-abused redman—call down the curses of heaven upon his shameless oppressors—and then let all honest men brand you as a God-forsaken hypocrite, as they surely will!

Knowing all this, and knowing, too, that escape was out of the question, the besieged family received to perish amid the flames of their home rather than rush forth to fall into such hands. And so, suffering in stern silence, they stood, rifle in hand, vainly watching and hoping for a chance to strike at least one deadly blow before they were forced to succumb.

More and more intense grew the heat. Already the flames had eaten their way through the roof, and blazing fragments were falling to the smoking floor above. The plastering was peeling off of the wall nearest the fiery wagon. The air was like that of an oven. To breathe at all they were forced to cast themselves prone upon the floor, and even then their throats seemed to blister, while their tongues were swollen, and protruded from their cracked and bleeding lips.

Then, with a deep, hoarse roar, Mad Ralph sprang to his feet.

He was a man who could have met death at the stake without gratifying his enemies by giving utterance to a single groan of agony, but he could not lie still to die the death of a dog while his limbs were unfettered—while weapons were in his hands.

Since die he must, he would die fighting—die dealing out death to his ruthless enemies!

With this grim resolve he flung wide the rear door, for the flames had made less progress on that side, and sprang forward into the open air, with a vengeful howl.

But he had waited too long.

The intense heat to which he had been subjected for such a length of time had seared his eyeballs and almost blinded him.

Before he could distinguish anything save the ruddy glare, the enemy were upon him, and he was cheated of his poor revenge.

We have seen how Red Tom was induced, by the suggestion of old Perico, to pass around to the rear of the house, and scarcely had he done so when Mad Ralph burst through the curling flame and smoke, almost running into the arms of his enemy—one even more fierce and ruthless than the redmen whom he had expected to encounter.

In an instant Red Tom recognized his bitterly hated enemy, and dropping his revolver without firing, he leaped forward like a panther, dealing a heavy fist shooting out and slighting fairly between the blinded eyes of the unfortunate settler. So forcible was the blow, that Mad Ralph was lifted clear of his feet and hurled backward, the revolver dropping from his nerveless hand and exploding as it fell.

With a howling curse of satanic exultation Red Tom flung himself bodily upon his long-sought enemy, his sinewy fingers almost uniting in the settler's throat.

That impetuous onset undoubtedly saved his life, though Red Tom was ignorant of the fact until afterward, for even as he fell upon Mad Ralph's quivering form, a pistol bullet tore its way through his feathered headdress, severing a gayly-colored plume in its passage.

This shot was discharged by little George, who saw his father felled to the ground, and sprang forward to avenge him, or share his fate.

Poor lad! his courage was worthy of a better reward!

One word, dear reader. There is more of truth than fiction in this story, and the events detailed in this chapter are historical. The tragedy occurred exactly as it is narrated. If the scene which follows is too horrible, pass it by unread; but blame me not for placing it upon record, since only by such means will the *actual truth* of the border troubles ever become generally known.

Red Tom cocked the pistol for a second and more effectual shot, but it was never discharged.

The weapon of old Perico covered him, and a bullet crashed through his brain, killing him instantly. But the murder of the poor youth was not suffered to remain long unavenged.

Ina Stevens saw him fall, and the sight banished every trace of personal fear from her heart.

Twice her revolver spoke in swift succession. Either bullet would have been sufficient, and the grizzled marauder fell in his tracks, stone-dead.

Warned by the mingled shouts and yells that their game had broken cover, the Border Vultures hastened around the blazing pile, eager to join in the bloody feast.

They were just in time to witness the fall of little George and old Perico, and caught sight of the avenging maiden as she bravely rushed forth to the assistance of her father.

Even in that moment of intense excitement they did not forget the emphatic and oft-repeated orders of Red Tom to capture the women without injuring them, no matter what the cost, and they promptly acted upon these instructions, rushing forward to seize the maiden.

The curling smoke and roaring flames now stood them in good stead. The first hid their advance, while the latter effectually deadened the sounds of their hasty footsteps. Besides, Ina had eyes only for her faintly struggling father, and her first intimation of their presence was when the cocked revolver was wrested from her hand, and a pair of strong arms were flung around her waist, holding her a helpless prisoner, despite her frantic struggles.

At this moment the blazing roof fell in, and the floor of the upper half-story also gave way, sending a column of sparks far up toward the lurid heavens.

A piercing scream accompanied this, a shriek so unutterably horrible, so full of mortal agony, that even these crime-hardened assassins started and turned pale beneath the disguising paint.

"God of mercy!! My poor mother!" gasped Ina, then sank a lifeless weight upon the arms of the Vulture who had captured her just in time to save Red Tom from her avenging bullet.

She had swooned, and for a time was happily unconscious of her bitter loss and misfortune.

At that wild cry Red Tom abandoned his now insensible enemy, and sprang to his feet with a raging curse, for he believed that expiring shriek had come from the lips of Ina Stevens. But at the sight of her white, unconscious form, lying against the paint-bedaubed breast of Pietro Cavella, his insane anger abruptly changed to a diabolical delight.

With a hoarse, grating laugh he took the insensible maiden in his arms, pressing her almost fiercely to his breast, as though afraid she would once more escape him.

"Bind that man, hand and foot," he cried, nodding toward luckless Mad Ralph. "Take away his arms, bind him and bear him over yonder to that haystack. We'll have lively fun!"

Without waiting to see how his orders were carried out, Red Tom bore his precious prize, to win which he had forfeited his soul a dozen times over, around the furiously burning pile, and across to where the excited horses were tethered.

Here he paused, and with a quick, suspicious glance around him, he polluted the pale, cold face, the lips and neck of the insensible maiden with repeated kisses, hot and passionate.

Fierce, ungoverned and animal though his passion was, Red Tom did love Ina Stevens, as far as it was possible for him to love any living being. Who knows? Had it been his fortune to have won her smiles instead of scorn, in those days gone by, when he was honestly trying to live the life of an honest, true man, might he not have succeeded? Might he not have become a man of whom his neighbors as well as wife and children might justly have been proud?

But that was not so written. Instead, he became a veritable devil in human shape.

A few moments later the bound form of Mad Ralph Stevens was carried around the ruined ranche and deposited beside the haystack, as indicated Red Tom.

"You, Pietro, will mount your horse and take the señorita up before you. Manuel will bear you company with two led horses. You will push forward at top speed for the point where we halted to assume these disguises, nor draw rein, save to change your mounts, until you get there. If we have not overtaken you before, wait there until we come. To horse, and quickly! There is no time to lose. This beacon will arouse the whole country, and there will be no safety for us until we have placed the Rio Grande fairly behind us."

Ten seconds later, the two men named were in saddle and ready for the route.

"Handle her carefully, Pietro," said Red Tom, as he lifted the senseless maiden up to the outlaw. "Keep her safe, but treat her as respectfully as though she were Mary Mother herself! If not, by the mother that bore you, I will tear out your heart and eat it before your eyes!"

The Mexican made no reply, as though he considered the threat a needless one, and quite superfluous. Setting his precious burden in as comfortable a position as the circumstances would permit, he gave his horse free rein, touched him with the spur, then darted away like an arrow fresh loosed from the bow, and was almost immediately swallowed up by the night.

"You, Jose, together with Domingo, will set to work picking up our dead, and tying them securely upon their horses. Benita and Juan will take their places among the captives, and the fourth would instantly be suspected. The alarm would spread as rapidly as ridden horse could run, and the answer would come promptly in the guise of stout-hearted men, eager to rescue or avenge the sufferers. They would strike the trail and follow it to our death. They would come in such force that fighting them would be out of the question. Flight alone could save the Border Vultures from the punishment they had so richly earned.

Not, Red Tom offered his golden *onzas* as a sort of salve to mollify the surviving brigands.

They had lost four of their number, slain outright. A fifth was badly wounded. The plunder which they had been promised was consumed by the flames.

A dozen horses were all they remained to pay them for these losses, and the dangers and hardships they were yet to undergo.

Jose, the wounded man, and Domingo set to work at once collecting their dead—Gaspard and Marco, who had fallen before the ruling shot of the old Texan hunter; Andres, shot down by the two heroes who afterward sacrificed their lives in performing what they deemed a sacred duty; old Perico, dead by the avenging hand of Ina Stevens—one by one these were gathered up and borne to the south corral, there to be firmly bound upon their own saddles, and carried toward the sunny land they were never again to behold with living eyes.

This was through no feeling of humanity, nor of respect for the dead. As human vultures and wolves they had lived, and under different circumstances they would have been left where they fell, to form a feast for their feathered and four-footed prototypes, without one pang of remorse or pity on the part of their surviving comrades. But it would not do to leave behind them any evidence by which the enemy could ascertain the number of their dead and wounded.

Meantime, Red Tom was not idle.

He hall-carried, half-dragged the form of his insensible enemy through the big gate and close to the huge haystack which had furnished the material for setting the house on fire.

Making choice of a post which was firmly planted in the ground, not more than twenty feet from the haystack, he propped Mad Ralph in an upright position against the stake, and firmly bound him to it, drawing his arms backward and making them embrace the post.

His head and feet were left at liberty, but his body was so fettered that escape, unaided, was absolutely impossible.

Leaving him thus to recover his senses from the severe shoking he had undergone, Red Tom passed over to dispatch his men along the trail with their dead and the captured horses.

"Ride with a free rein and a bloody spur, straight for the swamp cover. If you get there before I overtake you, wash off your paint and change your clothes. Bury the disguises deep in the swamp mud, and remove all traces of the transformations. Scatter as you leave the swamp, and break your trail as much as possible, without too great a loss of time. Push on direct for the old ford. Don't spare your horses. There are more where they came from, while one life won't go far if you are overtaken by these cursed Texan blood-hounds."

"You will follow us soon, señor?" a little doubtfully asked Domingo, with an eye to the promised gold.

"Certainly. My life is as dear to me as yours to you," promptly replied Red Tom. "But I must finish up our work here. There is one tongue yet to be stilled, then I will follow."

"If the emergency was not so pressing I would like nothing better than to wait with you and see the fun," said the Vulture, with a laugh. "But you can tell us all about it. *Adios!*"

With the dead bodies doubled up on the necks of the horses that bore them, the strange cavalcade started away at top speed.

Red Tom watched them for a moment, then, leading his noble Swiftfoot to a more convenient position, in case he should be surprised by an enemy before he had drank to the full the cup of revenge, the red-haired desperado returned to where he had left his unconscious victim.

Unconscious no longer. Just beginning to recover his senses, the moment he heard the taunting voice of his bitter enemy, Mad Ralph's brain cleared as by magic.

"Good!" exclaimed Red Tom, with a low, grating laugh that partly betrayed the devilish passions running riot in the organ that served him for a heart. "I began to fear I should be cheated out of the dream of my revenge, after all. I thank you, Mad Ralph Stevens!"

"My wife—my children—what have you done with them?" slowly and painfully uttered the doomed prisoner, so severely had his throat been burned.

"Do you know me?" kissed the desperado, coming closer. "I am Red Tom, the man whom you took by surprise and beat like a dog, merely because I had eyes to see and the heart of a man to love your daughter. Remember that, and then answer your own question!"

One prolonged, mighty effort Mad Ralph made to burst his bonds, but in vain. They had been applied by a cunning and careful hand, and never yielded the fraction of an inch.

Red Tom laughed mockingly at the futile effort. His long-deferred revenge was even sweeter than he had anticipated, and he wished he could prolong it for an age.

"Ah! what matter? I will tell you, that you may welcome the fate I have in store for you, because it will enable you to quickly rejoin the majority of your loved ones.

"Your wife died in the burning building. I laughed aloud as I heard her piercing screams of agony—I mocked at her piteous appeals and prayers for mercy! She was your wife—she was dear to your heart—you loved her; that was reason enough!"

Never a word uttered Mad Ralph. His moistened his cracked and bleeding lips with his swollen tongue. His flame-seared eyeballs glared fixedly upon the face of his jeering enemy.

"I cannot give you so good a report of your son. It was not my fault that he died so suddenly. I meant to have killed him up opposite you, so you could share each other's delights—so you could exchange experiences, and thus appreciate more fully the extent of my revenge. But he was shot down when foolishly trying to rescue you from my grasp.

"Your daughter is still living, and you will be delighted to hear that I have sent her on ahead to prepare for her bridal. Ha! that touches you, does it? Good! I mean you shall enjoy your last moments upon earth, if anything I can say will effect it.

"You shiver—you are growing cold! Well, I will warm you at any cost. I am not hard-hearted enough to see you suffer while the means of prevention are are in my hands."

With a mocking laugh, Red Tom struck a match and thrust it against the loose hay. In an instant the inflammable material blazed up, and ere long the entire side of the stack was glowing.

"Now, while you are warming up, let me tell you what I have in store for your precious child:

"I mean to take her to my new home among the Mexican hills, where we will live a gay and careless life among the brigands and cutthroats. It she proves reasonable, I will marry her in due form before a baptized priest, but whether or no, she shall be mine, body and soul.

"Then, as we lie lovingly clasped in each other's arms, revelling in the joys of a pure and holy love, I will tell her just how her idolized father died. I will paint in glowing colors the delights of his death-bed—how kindly I soothed his last moments with consoling words and a monstrous big bonfire! I will take her your last words—your dying speech and confession."

Much more the satanic villain said, but it is too revolting a picture to be painted in detail.

Everything that he believed would increase the torture of the hapless victim he brought into requisition, not confining himself to words alone.

The heat of the furiously-blazing stack grew more and more intense, yet Red Tom did not appear to feel it, so thoroughly was he wrapped up in his revenge.

But his insults were not to pass entirely unavenged. As he pressed closer to Mad Ralph, the tortured man raised both feet, and, planting them full in the stomach of his tormentor, hurled him backward into the mass of blazing hay! With a howling curse, Red Tom recovered himself.

What followed is too revolting for description. Let the curtain fall!

(To be continued.)

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THE BOY BOSS;
Or,
The Hidden Fortune.

A SEQUEL TO SPIDER AND STUMP.

By Bracebridge Hemyng,

(JACK HARKAWAY),

AUTHOR OF THE "JACK HARKAWAY" AND "BOB LIGHTFOOT" STORIES, ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER VIII.

[Continued from page 6.]

"WHAT'S up now?" asked Spider.

"Oh, good Lord," answered Stump; "I've had the worst scare I ever had in my life."

"How do you mean?"

"I was going along der path with der virtuous intention of lightin' der fire."

"Yes, you've told me that."

"And gettin' der supper ready against yer got home, knowin' yer'd feel tired and hungry after all yer hard work."

"Well?"

"I was thinkin' of yer, Spi, and sayin' how good der supper would taste."

"You are extremely kind."

"That's so. I couldn't be anything else with you, though I did go off kinder on my ear."

"What was the matter?"

"Well, yer made me a bit mad; only I forgive yer. It isn't you that's talkin'; it's yer temper."

"That's cool," said Spider, "when I wasn't to blame in the matter at all. But never mind; 'go on.'"

"I'm a-goin' on if yer won't interrup' a chap."

"What sent you back kiting?" demanded Spider. Stump lowered his voice to a terrified whisper.

"I seen the ghost!" he replied.

"What, the old man?"

"Yes, der ole man."

"Where was he?"

"Where was der ole bloat? Why, right here in der path, an' a-comin' dis way, only when he saw me he put up his hands and give me such a look I thought he was a-goin' 'er eat me, sure."

"You're a fool," replied Spider.

"Who's a fool?" asked Stump, indignantly.

"You are."

"If yer say dat ag'in I'll boat yer in der snoot. I don't allow nobody ter take any liberty wid me."

"Come and try," said Spider, who was losing all patience with his companion.

"I'm yer jum-tum, tooslip," replied Stump.

He clinched his fists and advanced to Spider, who, reaching out his long arm, hit him on the nose and made it bleed.

"Yer a coward," exclaimed Stump. "Yer hit in der face, an' I meant dis to be er scientific tussle. It ain't science ter hit er chap in der face. Look at yer hands. They're as this as wire and as sharp as a hatchet. It ain't square. I ain't got no chance against a lath of er feller like yer. If I was ter run against yer, I'd cut myself in half."

"Keep a civil tongue in your head," answered Spider, "or I'll lick yer within an inch of your life."

"Mean it?"

"You bet I do. I've stood your nonsense long enough."

"Then my name's Walker," said Stump, putting a wad of chewing-gum in his mouth. "Der ghost is preferable ter yer society. So long, cully. Tra-la-la, bulldozer."

When he saw that he was really going, Spider repented of his harsh and hasty language, wanting him to stay.

It was dreadful to be alone in that solitary wood, under the blasted oak, with the consciousness that there was a house reputed to be haunted within a short distance.

"Say, Stump," he cried, "what's got into you?"

"I've got der monkey up my back," replied Stump.

"Won't yer stay by me?"

"Yer can't hire me."

"Then go, and be hanged to you," exclaimed Spider, growing angry again.

Stump disappeared in the path with a careless air, but he had not been gone more than half a minute before he rushed back with the same precipitation as before.

"Oh, Lord, der ghost!" he cried. "I'm a haunted boy, an' dat's as sure as yer live."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed Spider, shouldering his spade. "Where is he?"

"Right there."

"Follow me."

Valiantly Spider led the way up the path, Stump following him in fear and trembling.

They went along for a considerable distance, and saw nothing whatever to arouse their apprehension.

In due time they reached the haunted house, without having encountered the dreaded apparition of the gray-haired old man.

"What have you been giving me, a kid?" inquired Spider, severely.

"Not by a darned sirht," replied Stump. "I seed him twice, but where in thunder der ole fraud gets to kills me."

"You saw him?"

"Plain as I see yer now."

"Well, I'm bound to believe you, though it seems very odd," replied Spider; "anyway, we're worked enough for to-day; let us rest and eat; we will sleep here to-night."

In being daylight, Stump did not feel so nervous, and he willingly picked up sticks and helped to make a fire, over which they cooked some fish and pork, eating it after the manner of savages, with their fingers.

When they had satisfied their hunger they adjourned to the parlor, and sweeping off some of the dust, the accumulation of years, and disturbing the housekeeping arrangements of innumerable spiders, they sat down.

Stump produced some cigarette-paper and tobacco.

"Shall I roll you one?" he asked.

"Thank you, a smoke will go good," replied Spider.

Just then the door was thrown open and a tall man with dark hair and a long beard stood on the threshold.

He had a repulsive cast of countenance, and his lower lips protruded over the upper.

"Hello, my lads!" he exclaimed. "It seems you are making yourselves at home."

"Why shouldn't we?" replied Spider. "This is an empty house."

"True; but whose house is it?"

"Marling's, I believe, from what I've heard; only he killed his brother, and since then the house is haunted, and old Marling has no use for it."

THE BOY BOSS.—"WITH A HORRIBLE CRY MARLING RAN FROM THE HOUSE, AND WAS QUICKLY LOST TO SIGHT AMID THE THICKLY GROWING TREES OF THE FOREST."—SEE PAGE 23.

The stranger's face became convulsed with rage, and he chewed the end of his mustache viciously.

"It's a lie!" he cried. "A lie!"

"Well, I give it you as I heard it."

"Who from?"

"Old Salt, the fisherman."

"Curse the chattering old fool. I'll fix his flint if he talks about me."

"Are you Marling?"

"I am!" was the reply.

"Then we have to apologize for taking possession of your old house, Mr. Marling, without your permission, but we have a little business on the island, and——"

"What business?" fiercely demanded Marling.

"We want to buy some real estate, for the purpose of erecting a refinery."

"Well, you can't buy a rod from me. I was walking through the forest and I saw the smoke from your fire. That's how I came to visit this durned old ranche, and if you value a whole skin you'll get out of here just as quick as you can."

"Doesn't it occur to you, Mr. Marling, that you are something like the dog in the manger?"

"Why, sir?"

"Because you don't occupy this tumble-down old house yourself and you won't let any one else do so."

"I won't have you here!"

"Then, perhaps, you will be good enough to recommend us to some hotel," said Spider.

"You know blamed well there is no such thing here. Git out!"

"At once?"

"Right away!"

"I'd like to stop and see if the ghost of your amiable brother would pay us another visit."

Marling turned livid at this thrust.

"Ghost!" he repeated. "What do you mean by ghost?"

"Why, the spirit of the brother you killed, or rather murdered, as neighbor Salt says. He came here yesterday, and he has been seen to-day."

"It's all a pack of lies! Git!"

Suddenly Marling, who was facing the closet in the parlor, while the boys had their backs turned to it, saw something which made him shrink back in the doorway.

He extended his hand before him, as if trying to ward off something.

"Don't! don't!" he cried. "Go back! go back! Am I always to be persecuted in this way!"

A sepulchral voice replied:

"This is your punishment on earth. What your portion will be hereafter it is not permitted me to say."

With a horrible cry Marling ran from the house, and was quickly lost to sight amid the thickly growing trees of the forest.

The boys had turned round directly they heard the voice, and were not at all surprised to find the gray-haired old man confronting them.

"Spirit or man, I'm going for it!" exclaimed Spider.

He made a dash at the apparition, but, as before, it glided, rather than walked, into the closet, the door shut after it, and, when Spider opened it, there was nothing to be seen.

"This is an uncommonly good trick, however it is done," he remarked.

"Trick!" repeated Stump.

"Yes. You heard the old man speak?"

"I did."

"Well, it's asking too much of one's imagination to ask one to credit the fact of a ghost talking. I'm going to settle this thing, or perish in the attempt."

"Don't be rash. He'll fly away with yer," said Stump, "or drag yer down to der sulphur lake, an' I'll never see yer no more."

"A fat lot that would hurt you."

"Who'd I have to give me spendin'-money, an' buy me ice-cream, an' take me up ter see der elephant, an' bring me ter a desert island, an' show me ghosts, an' bulldose me generally?"

Spider paid no attention to this pathetic appeal on the part of his companion.

He opened the door of the closet and peered into it. The floor was solid, so was the ceiling. The wooden walls were strong enough to resist a battering ram, as he ascertained by kicking them vigorously.

What, then, had become of the ghost?

This was the problem which Spider set himself to solve.

The sun at that moment burst through the leaden clouds, and cast his rays into the room.

They fell upon a bright knob about the size of a five-cent piece, which was set in one of the sides of the closet.

Spider saw it and uttered a cry of joy.

"Eureka!" he exclaimed.

"Who's she?" inquired Stump.

"It isn't a he or a she. Why don't you read and improve your mind?"

"Oh, I thought it was the name of your girl."

"No sir. It's Greek, and means that I have found it."

"Found what?"

"The ghost's secret."

"Bully for you! That's der lum-tum capah."

"Oh, give us a rest on the lum-tum business," said Spider, impatiently.

"What's bitin' yer?"

"I'm only thinking what a fool you are to what I am."

"See here," replied Stump, with an air of injured innocence, "give us a rest on the fool business, won't you?"

Spider pressed his hand on the shining knob and a sliding panel fell back.

It revealed a cavity in the wall, and the friendly sun still shining, enabled him to see a flight of rudely made wooden steps, which led he knew not where.

"Great Cæsar!" said Stump; "how did yer tumble ter that racket?"

"By the force of superior intelligence," said Spider.

"Force of what?"

"Ah, pshaw!"

"Say that again, won't you? I do like ter have er dicshonary slung at me. It kinder makes me feel like a boy agin, an' I expect all the time that schoolteacher's goin' ter pull my young ears for eatin' peanuts an' throwin' der shells at der red-headed boy in der next row."

Spider struck a match which he had in his pocket and cautiously descended the steps, which the sliding panel had revealed to his delighted view.

They conducted him to a cellar under the parlor, and he was not at all surprised to behold the white-haired old man confronting him.

"Away, away!" said the ghost.

The match burnt out, but Spider struck another.

This enabled him to see the old man again, and he seized him by the beard.

It did not come off, or turn to ashes in his hand, and now he knew that he had no ghost to deal with, but real flesh and blood like himself.

"Come up-stairs!" he exclaimed. "This thing is played out. I was bound to unravel the mystery, and I'm not going to stop half way."

"Let go your hold, young man!" replied the supposed ghost. "You have no necessity to outrage a man of my years. Lead on. I'll follow you."

Spider released him, and motioned him to go up the ladder first.

"Look out, Stumpy!" he cried. "I've treed the coon. It's a man, but don't let him escape!"

"Nary man gets away from me!" replied Stump, picking up a stove-lifter and placing himself in an attitude of defense.

In another minute the old man appeared in the room, and Spider was close at his heels.

The mystery was now near its solution.

CHAPTER IX.

A FIGHT FOR THE TREASURE.

THE sad, care-worn features of the supposed ghost, his gaunt, attenuated frame, his long, white, matted, unkempt hair, and the expression of deep, lasting, carking sorrow which was stamped upon his face, added to his ragged garments, which were nearly falling to pieces through long wear and decay, were quite affecting.

Spider gazed upon him with a feeling of pity.

Every feeling of supernatural terror had passed away, and he knew now that this poor old man was made of flesh and blood like himself.

No doubt he had some very cogent reason for hiding himself away in the manner he had done.

That there was a terrible secret connected with his earlier life he could not doubt, and he hoped in a brief space to hear all about it.

The old man sat down on one of the dust-covered chairs and heaved a deep sigh.

"Ole boy," exclaimed Stump, "I'm glad to see yer. It's true that yer've given me er bad scare, but I'm of er forgivin' disposition, and won't chalk it up 'gin yer."

"My young friend," replied the ghost, "it was necessary that I should hide away, for I am supposed to be dead, and were it known that I lived, there is one on this island who would quickly hurry me to that grave which he thinks I already occupy."

Spider could not help wondering what charm life could have for so forlorn a wretch.

He was deprived not only of the ordinary comforts, but almost of the necessities of life. Where, then, could come the inducement for living?

In the ignorance of youth he had yet to learn that the older the people get the more they cling to life, no matter how miserable their circumstances may be.

"You allude to Marling, do you not?" said Spider.

The old man started.

"You have guessed my secret," he replied.

"What information has led you to that conclusion, I do not know, but we are brothers, and I am sorry to say that in our case the scriptural tragedy of Cain and Abel was nearly repeated. My brother thinks me dead. You saw how he fled aghast, only a short time ago, when his guilty eyes fell upon my nearly forgotten face."

Stump carelessly rolled a cigarette.

"Tell us der story," he said.

"It is a sad one," answered the old man.

"All der better. I'd like ter hear something ter make me cry."

"Well, you shall hear it."

THE OLD MAN'S STORY.

"My name is Isaac Marling, and when my father died he left his property to be equally divided between us. It was not about money that my brother and I ever quarreled. A pretty face made all the mischief. Dolly Holmes was my idol, and she preferred me to my brother. Though I knew he was as madly in love with her as I was, I offered her marriage. She accepted me. The night before we were to be married my brother crept up to my bedroom and hit me with an ax. You see the scar on my head now."

He paused to point out the scar with which he was disfigured.

"Thinking me dead," he murmured, "he dragged me to the woods and placed some stones over my body. In the night I recovered consciousness, pushed away the stones, and crawled away from the spot which was dyed with my blood. How I recovered I know not; but this I know—my hair

DASHING DOLORES.—"INA HAD EYES ONLY FOR HER FAINTLY STRUGGLING FATHER, AND HER FIRST INTIMATION OF THEIR PRESENCE WAS WHEN THE COCKED REVOLVER WAS WRESTED FROM HER HAND."—SEE PAGE 22.

turned white in a single night. I grew well again in time, subsisting on what berries and roots I could find. When strong enough I killed birds and caught fish, living like a savage, but I dared not venture near the house, for I knew next time my brother would surely kill me. At length I roamed about at night. The first thing I discovered was that he had placed more stones over the spot where he thought my body was lying, and had erected a rude, stone cross."

Spider nodded his head, as much as to say, "I have seen it."

"The second thing I found out was that he had shut the house and gone away, then I contrived the hiding-place in which you found me. Thirdly, I ascertained that he had told Dolly that I had fallen off our boat in a storm at sea, and was dead, whereupon, with the fickleness of woman, she married him. This utterly broke my heart, and I have been dragging on a miserable existence ever since, my only pleasure being to appear occasionally to my brother, and make him believe he is haunted by my ghost. I will haunt him to his grave, and when he dies my task on earth is finished, and I shall be ready to follow him to the throne of the eternal judge."

"How long ago was this?" inquired Spider.

"I have been dead to the world five years," replied Isaac Marling; "and now I have gratified your curiosity, will you not tell me what brings you to this almost unknown island?"

"Oh, a little business!" replied Spider.

"Of what nature?"

"We're der real estate speckerlaters," said Stump; "we's goin' ter make this a new sorter Coney Island, run a line of steamers from New York, erect houses and hotels, and have er elevated railroad from one end of der island to another."

The old man looked incredulous.

"It my heart was not broken," he said, "I could go to your city and move amongst the rich and gay."

"It takes money to do that," remarked Spider.

"And have I not got money?"

"Five cents!" suggested Stump.

"Perhaps you could sell your share of the land here for a dollar," remarked Spider, "and you might get something for yourself, as the sylvan curiosity of the wild man of the woods."

"Cease your jests!" exclaimed Isaac Marling, waving his hand with dignity. "I have within my grasp a treasure that would make your eyes sparkle—ay, and the eyes of those older than you; for the greed of gold generally grows with age."

"Where is it?" inquired Spider.

"In the ground."

"Buried, eh?"

"Yes; hidden gold. All gold, and it is mine."

"Who buried it?" Spider asked, becoming greatly interested.

"A man who came to this island in a ship by night. He penetrated by the moonlight into the wood, and I saw him dig a hole in the ground and hide his gold."

"Was there much of it?"

"Dozens of bags. I have seen it, for when he was gone I dug in the same spot and looked at it, and gloated over it. 'Ha, ha!' said I, 'this is the drops men sell their souls for, and commit all the crimes which are banned in the Decalogue. It is for this the son slays his father, for this the clerk barters his honor, for this a woman sells her innocence, for this the gambler takes a life.'"

"How do you know that the man who has buried it has not been after it?"

"'Twas but yesterday that I looked upon it, and when I saw you digging I thought you were searching for the treasure."

Spider determined to be open and candid with him, and he regretted that he had not been so before.

"We were looking for it?" he replied.

"Then why did you lie to me about your real purpose in coming here?" asked the old man, severely.

"Because we were afraid to trust any one with our secret. Were we digging in the right place?" The old man shook his hoary locks.

"Before I answer you," he rejoined, "you must tell me all, without any reserve."

Spider made a virtue of necessity, and told him the entire story, without concealing anything.

"Seems to me, boy," said Isaac Marling, "that you would have been in a bad fix if you had not met me."

"Why, sir?" asked Spider, with more respect than he had hitherto exhibited.

"All the digging in the world would not have revealed that treasure."

"Why not, if it is buried?"

"Come with me. I will show you where it is."

At this declaration Spider jumped up and shook his hand.

"Will you, indeed, do this?" he cried.

"Yes. What good is the money to me, and, if your story is true, as I believe it is, the treasure of right belongs to you, and you have been wrongfully deprived of it. But make me one promise."

"Name it."

"Swear that you will strive to do good rather than evil with the fortune. It seldom falls to the lot of a young man to have so much power as this will give you."

"I'll do all the good I can, but, of course, I shall want to have a little fun."

"Innocent amusement can be purchased cheaply. It is only vice that is costly."

"Spider ain't vicious," exclaimed Stump. "He's der innocentest cuss you ever see. He never played no tricks, sir. He never was the boy to throw no snow-balls at or hook behind his back. He'd die sooner than tie a tin-can onter er dog's tail. He never drinks no beer, nor smokes cigarettes. Ice-cream, soda and Sunday school's what he bankers after. I'm der bad boy, and I know I ain't no fit companion for der likes of him."

"Is that so? I'm glad to hear such a good character of our lucky young friend."

"Oh, he's er angel in pants. Dat's what he is."

"It is a pity he has such a friend as you describe yourself to be, and he would do well to get rid of you."

"Oh, he'll bounce me. He said he'd give me der grand shake of I didn't ease up a bit on my wickedness, but Lor' sakes! I can't do it; I's awful bad."

"Sir," exclaimed Isaac Marling, "always brings its own punishment with it. I have not long to live, and with one foot in the grave I may be permitted to preach to you, but I have said enough. Come, the resting-place of the treasure shall be made known to you."

He led the way out of the old house, and the boys followed him with a feeling of elation which they could not restrain.

Conducting them along the winding path, he stopped, as they expected he would, at the stone cross.

"Take up your pick and shovel," he exclaimed. "The money is under that big stone at the head of the cairn."

Willingly they set to work, and after removing the stone, dug down about a foot.

Spider uttered a cry of joy.

His spade had turned up a bag of gold, and the canvas covering being damp and rotted, the glittering pieces rolled out.

Another and another bag followed, till in all fifty were lying on the ground.

The delight of the boys knew no bounds.

Now they were satisfied that Uncle Rasper had not been dreaming, as Stump had more than once suggested. It was all a blissful reality, and they had got ahead of Binnacle Jim, who had, as yet, failed to find the spot he was in search of.

"Hurrah!" cried Spider, clutching at a handful of the gold pieces. "This beats all the placer-mining: we've struck it rich."

Suddenly he started and turned pale.

A fourth person had joined them, and he felt, rather than saw, his presence, until he looked up.

Then he saw Farmer Marling staring at them, but Isaac had crouched down at the head of the cavern and was hidden from view.

"What are you doing on my land?" asked the farmer, his eyes glistening at the sight of the gold.

"You can see what we are doing," replied Spider. "But allow me to tell you that this is not your land."

"Indeed!" said Marling, with a sneer; "I should like to know whose it is, then."

"Your brother Isaac's!"

The farmer turned pale and trembled visibly.

"Ah, pshaw!" he answered; "he's dead."

At this Isaac sprang up, and pointing his arm threateningly at his brother, fixed him with the glassy stare of his cold, gray eye.

"Not so!" he exclaimed. "I live, though you tried to murder me. For years I have lived the ascetic life of a recluse, but the time has come to throw off the mask and expose you."

For a moment the farmer's cheek blanched, then the color returned to his livid face.

"Ha, ha!" he laughed, harshly, "so you have been playing ghost, and I was fool enough to dread you."

"You will find me more dangerous now."

"Fool!" hissed Marling, between his clinched teeth; "you have rushed upon your fate. What I failed to do before I will accomplish now."

He hastily drew a pistol from his hip pocket.

This he leveled at his brother's head, the latter crouching down again behind the cairn.

It was lucky that he did so, for the pistol was immediately discharged, and the bullet flew harmlessly over him.

Marling coolly cocked the weapon a second time, and walked round the cairn, to get a full view of the unarmed man.

Spider rushed after him with the spade, determining to do all that was in his power to save one who had acted so generously to him.

"Drop that pistol!" he exclaimed.

Marling turned fiercely upon him.

"What have you got to say in the matter?" he demanded.

"If you harm a hair of his head I will split your skull open!"

Marling stood irresolute for a moment, then, as if his mind was made up, he turned half round again, facing his brother.

The latter was crouching on the ground in the extremity of terror, for he feared his last hours had come.

His brother's attitude had taken him completely by surprise, for it is fair to suppose he at first imagined he would be terrified at finding him alive, and beg for mercy.

"Spare me, spare me!" he groaned.

"Die like a dog!" was the reply.

"Have mercy! I will not molest you or yours."

Marling's only answer to this appeal was to send a bullet crashing through his brain, causing the wretched man to fall dead on the hard ground.

At the same moment Spider raised the spade and struck the cowardly murderer on the head, fracturing his skull and compelling him to measure his length by the side of his brother.

Stump now arrived with the pick, and supplemented the blow with another, which laid the brain bare, and killed the wretch as surely as if he had been struck by lightning.

"I sees your blow and goes you one better," he remarked.

"They are both dead, I fear," said Spider.

"Der ghost's er goner, and I guess I settled der hash of der brother. Send for der coroner."

(To be continued.)

"The Boy Boss" was commenced in No. 629.

SEAWAIF.—"AND GROVELING AT THE FEET OF THE MAN HE HAD TRIED TO MURDER, SI GIBBS CLASPED HIS ANKLES, AND ACTUALLY KISSED HIS FEET IN A PAROXYSM OF ABJECT FEAR."

WILLIAM A. OWENS, PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 7, CENTRAL AVENUE, JERSEY CITY, N. J.

Distinguished Scholars of Jersey City (N. J.) Schools.

WILLIAM A. OWENS,

PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 7, CENTRAL AVENUE JERSEY CITY, N. J.

WILLIAM A. OWENS is a very promising scholar of Grammar School No. 7, Central Avenue, Jersey City, N. J. He is making a high per centage in each of his studies, and goes as high as one hundred in his arithmetic. When we saw him recently he had just passed his examination, and been promoted from the studies of the second to the first grade of the first class. He looked bright and happy because he had done well, and because he was determined to do even better during the new term. He was born in New York, September 19th, 1865, and is therefore over thirteen years of age. He is the son of Francis and Sarah Jane Owens. Beginning to go to school when about six years old, he entered the Primary Department of No. 13, in Jersey City, and subsequently became a pupil in the same department of his present school. He has advanced from class to class with good records for both study and behavior. He has an agreeable face, with regular and expressive features. His manners are polite and self-possessed. He is a boy who understands his duties and opportunities. Those who see him daily observe his growing intelligence and manliness. Diligence in school will be followed by a well-directed ambition in the wider field of life.

ANNIE M. PFORR,

PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 8, SHERMAN AVENUE, JERSEY CITY.

ANNIE M. PFORR is an amiable and intelligent-looking girl, who is a member of the first class of Grammar School No. 8, Sherman Avenue, Jersey City, N. J. In presenting her to us for this notice, the principal stated that he had not a word to say except in her favor. She is an earnest scholar, a good-hearted girl and an obedient daughter. The school is doing much for her mind, but she carries each day among her companions there a cheerfulness of spirit and a gentleness of nature which are much appreciated by both her teachers and classmates. She was born in Jersey City, September 16th, 1864, making her in her fifteenth year. She is the daughter of John F. and S. E. Pforr. Her whole school career has been passed in the same school. When about seven years old she came as a pupil in the Primary Department of No. 8, and she has been in the classes of the school up to the present time, having now been for some time in the first class. Her per centage is ninety-eight. She studies all the branches with the same diligence and success. She has a large head, with a prominent brow. She is modest and girl-like, while her intelligence and self-reliance are not less evident.

ANNIE M. PFORR, PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 8, SHERMAN AVENUE, JERSEY CITY, N. J.

SEAWAIF;

Or,

THE WHITE KING OF NIMIGI.

The Marvelous Adventures of a Boy, a Monkey and an Elephant in the Wilds of Africa.

By JACK MANLEY,

AUTHOR OF "THREE LIVES," "SUPE THE SHADOW," "GHOSTS OF THE BUCCANEERS," ETC.

CHAPTER XIV.

SHOWING HOW MAKO REDUCED SI GIBBS TO SUBJECTION.

OUR hero's first feeling at finding himself face to face with his old enemy was one of alarm.

The apparent and abject terror of Si Gibbs, however, reassured him.

In fact, the villain, for a time, fancied himself face to face with a spectre that had come to demand from him an explation of his crimes against its living self.

He gradually recovered his self-possession, however, and finally asked, in a tremulous voice:

"For Heaven's sake, what brings you here?"

"It is for me to question," responded our hero, sternly. "The least you can do, after having tried to murder me, is to answer me truly. Where do you come from?"

Si Gibbs hesitated and looked at his questioner uneasily, before saying:

"From Nimigi."

"And where is Nimigi?"

"Three days' journey from here to the west."

"Is it a village or a kingdom?"

"It is the chief city of a kingdom of the same name."

"And how did you get to Nimigi, if one may ask?"

"I was captured from a wreck on the coast and sold as a slave to some merchants, who took me there."

And Si Gibbs proceeded to tell the following story.

A year after our hero's disappearance from Southport, Jabe Junk had suddenly appeared there.

Up to that time it had been believed that, as Si Gibbs had reported, our hero had fallen overboard and been drowned.

Now Jabe, who was wild with rage at the loss of his young friend, the preserver of his daughter, told the true story, and related how, after having been so strangely rescued from the sea, Seawall had fallen into the power of Mao Kombo and the savages of the Zimbu River.

Although in the absence of the principal witness no legal steps could be taken against him, public opinion was still strong enough to force the would-be murderer to fly from Southport.

He had gone to New York, where, after living in great misery for a time, he shipped before the mast in the schooner *Maria Hawkins*, bound on a trading voyage to the Congo River.

The schooner was wrecked on the Gaboon coast, and, as if in judgment, Si fell into the hands of the negroes, as the victim whose life he had attempted had, and at the very time when Seawall was high in favor at the court of Corsico the First, his enemy was hoeing yams and cracking firewood for a negro task-master on the Gaboon.

This man had finally sold him to a native trader, who carried him forty days' journey into the interior, and sold him in turn to the King of Nimigi.

Si was, as it happened, a pretty good amateur juggler, and the king had taken a fancy to him, and, instead of employing him at hard labor, had treated him well and made him perform for him daily. But the king had died two months before his meeting with Seawall, and the queen, who was a middle-aged vixen, of much ferocity, had set the late favorite at the most menial employments.

One day Si was hoeing corn in a field outside of the city, when an opportunity to escape offered, and he had not permitted it to pass.

"But where were you striking for?" asked Seawall. "Where did you expect to get to?"

"I don't know where; I only wanted to get away from there," replied Si.

Seawall smiled.

"You'd have found it out of the frying-pan into the fire," he said. "I wouldn't go back over that road for a million dollars."

"But what are you going to do, then?"

"Keep straight ahead."

"In the direction of Nimigi?"

"In the direction of Nimigi. There is no possible safety in turning back. I'll push right ahead and chance it."

"Then," said Si, "I'll go with you."

"Indeed!" remarked our hero, sarcastically. "Don't you think you had better get my consent first?"

"You won't refuse it, will you?"

"I will refuse it. Why, confound your eyes, I'm doing the liberal thing by you not to kill you as it is. What claim have you on my mercy?"

"None, I acknowledge," responded Si, with hypocritical mournfulness, "except that of a fellow-creature in distress."

"And what brings you in distress? If you had not tried to murder me would you be here?"

"But I did not intend to do it," expostulated Si. "I assure you I didn't."

"I suppose it was an accident, then?" sneered Seawall.

"Well, not exactly that. But, you see, I was crazy with fear. The storm frightened the wits out of me——"

"It hadn't much of a job to do that," muttered our hero.

"And I didn't know what I was about."

"A species of emotional insanity, I suppose?" commented the listener, with a sarcastic smile.

"Exactly. But come, now, Seawail; you are a brave, noble-hearted fellow——"

"Oh, cheese it!" interrupted the person complimented.

"But you are," persisted Si, fawningly. "I know you are, and I'm sure you won't turn your back on a poor unarmed man in this awful solitary country. You're well armed, you've got that big monkey there, and I am defenseless. What have you got to fear from me?"

"Now that I know you, I wouldn't be afraid of you with a whole Springfield arsenal about your clothes. But I don't see why I should put myself out of the way to help you."

"You won't. Only let me go with you, that's all. I'll follow you like a dog. I'll be your servant. I'll be your slave. I'll kiss the ground you tread. I'll lick your feet. But, in the name of God, don't desert me!"

And groveling at the feet of the man he had tried to murder, Si Gibbs clasped his ankles, and actually used his feet in a paroxysm of abject fear.

The wretch was really frightened out of his wits. He dared no longer encounter the dangers of that unknown land of which so brave a heart as Seawail's even spoke with a shudder.

Neither did he dare to return to the place from which he had escaped, for that meant death.

Nothing remained for him except to perish in the wilderness or follow our hero, who, having already escaped the perils of over two years among the savages, stood a fair chance of doing so still longer.

Seawail hesitated.

He had too brave and true a heart to ever abandon any one in distress, but in the present instance he paused doubtingly.

Si Gibbs was a worthless and treacherous man.

He had attempted his life once; why should he not again?

Still, to leave him alone in these wastes, without even the means of obtaining game to keep him alive, was a revolting idea to him.

"You tried to kill me once," he said, at last.

"Oh, come now, old fellow!" expostulated Si, reassured by the expression of the speaker's voice. "Didn't try, you know. It was an accident."

"Well, say it was an accident," said our hero, meaningly. "Is it the sort of an accident that is likely to occur again?"

"Never!" exclaimed Si, energetically. "I swear it!"

"You've got full command of your nerves now, eh?"

"You bet!"

"Very well, then. I'll allow you to travel with me."

And cutting short the fulsome thanks Mr. Gibbs began to pour forth, Seawail signified to him to start, while he loaded some of the antelope-meat on Mako's shoulders.

Now Mako had watched and listened to the entire foregoing conversation, and, if he did not, certainly looked as if he comprehended it.

To the practised eye of his master it was evident that the ape had taken a strong dislike to his new comrade.

Mr. Gibbs, on his part, eyed the animal with no friendly regard.

He could not make out what it all meant. The sight of Mako walking like a man and carrying his gun and knife dazed him.

Still he dared ask no questions, and marched on between the ape and his master in silence.

At last Seawail, glad to have some one to talk to, even if it was such a poor specimen of a man as his companion, began to tell of his adventures since he had left the *Blazer*.

Si listened wonderingly.

"And do you mean to tell me that miserable ape can do all that?" he asked.

"Look out," warned Seawail, while Mako chattered his teeth, as if he had understood the insult. "Don't get him mad."

"Get him mad!" exclaimed Si. "What nonsense!"

"You won't find it nonsense if he gets a hand on you."

Mr. Gibbs laughed sneeringly.

"That'll do," he said. "I'll give us some cold potatoes on a plate, now, if you want to, but no more monkey yarns. Why, if I ever hit him, the poor, shrivel-faced baboon, I'd make a hole clean through him."

Mako ground his teeth angrily, and Si went on talking to him with a broad grin.

"So you're the monk that goes around eating up men and lions, and the rest, are you?"

The ape nodded his wise old head.

"Well, suppose you eat that, then?" remarked Si, jocularly.

And he dealt the monkey an able-bodied cuff on the ear with his open hand.

He had scarcely done it when he felt a blow in his stomach that might have been dealt by a spike-driver.

It was Moko's head, who had butted him after the favorite fashion of the African savages.

Si ripped out a yell that would have waked the dead, and gripped his agonized stomach with both hands.

"Saints and sinners!" he howled. "The gol dinged beast has paralyzed me."

"I thought you were going to make a hole clean through him," observed Seawail.

"So I will, gosh hang him!" screamed Si.

And he jumped at Mako, who was skipping about in high glee at the success of his assault.

The agile ape evaded the attack without difficulty, and honored his opponent by a clip in the ear as he shot by him.

This blow lifted Si clear off his feet, and when he came down his enemy planted a left-hander under his jaw and knocked him backward.

Then he jumped upon him, and the two rolled on the ground.

Seawail would not interfere, for he knew Mako was certain to get the best of it.

And so he did.

Within fifteen minutes Si Gibbs was the worst whipped man ever seen outside of a prize ring.

Both his eyes were black, his clothing hung about him in rags, and there was not enough hair left on his skull to make a penny paint-brush.

As for Mako, he was as fresh as a daisy.

"You gol dinged beast," groaned Si, glaring at him out of his half-shut and bloodshot eyes. "Only wait a while. You took me unawares this time."

Mako made a threatening movement, and his victim jumped hastily behind our hero.

This action pleased the ape more than enough.

He mopped and gibbered gleefully, and finally taking up the hind-quarters of the antelope which he had been carrying, he signed to Si to take hold of them.

"What does he mean now?" demanded the villain.

"He says you've got to carry his load for him," replied Seawail.

"I'll see him further, first," cried Si.

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when Mako hauled off, and the section of the deer struck him in the face.

He ran, bellowing, to Seawail to save him, while Mako danced him, beating him with the meat till he dropped.

"You'd better give in," recommended Seawail.

"He won't let up on you till you do."

Si groaned in anguish, but he saw that our hero spoke the truth.

After wallowing in the dirt till Mako began to exhibit signs of impatience, he got hurriedly up.

The meat had been so badly used in its service as a war-club that Seawail threw it away.

Mako watched this operation much to his disgust for a minute.

Then he brisked up, and leaping on Si's shoulders, he squatted there, chattering, as much as to say:

"Well, you've got to carry something, at any rate. I'm ready to start, if you are."

Of course, a word from our hero would have caused him to descend, but Seawail had two good reasons to dislike his companion not to enjoy seeing him punished.

So, simply assuring Si in answer to his mournful wails that it was impossible for him to make the monkey obey him when he was angry, he resumed the interrupted march.

Staggering under the heavy weight of the ape, Si followed him, urged on by lively applications of the staff in the hands of his rider.

CHAPTER XV.

IN WHICH OUR ADVENTURERS HAVE A BRUSH WITH THE PYGMIES.

DESIRING to render Si Gibbs as miserable as possible, our hero marched as rapidly and as long as he could.

A gazelle killed by the way was added to the load already on the miserable villain's shoulders, and by the time the sun set he was ready to drop.

Still his troubles were not over.

Superintended by Mako, he was forced to gather wood and kindle a fire, while Seawail prepared the gazelle for roasting.

Now Si Gibbs, as we know, was a vengeful brute, and deep down in his cowardly heart he swore to make our hero and his faithful follower pay for this.

However, for the present, he was powerless, so he ate his supper with as good a grace as possible and lay down.

But not to sleep; his dark thoughts forbade that.

Seawail had the first watch, so Mako coiled up before the fire to slumber until his turn to relieve guard arrived.

The place in which they were camped was a lonely and densely wooded valley, close under the base of the mountains.

As he watched our hero marching in a circle around the camp, the sombre broodings of the restless villain shaped themselves into a murderous purpose.

He forgot even his fears in his eagerness to gratify his hatred.

Why should he not kill his enemy now?

A single blow, a shot from the gun which lay close to Mako's elbow, would do it.

But then he would have to encounter the ape himself, and his experiences with that redoubtable champion that day had impressed him with greater respect for him even than he entertained for his master.

Si looked from the gun to Seawail long and longingly.

Twice he was about to rise, and twice the sight of the sleeping Mako made him pause.

Then his eye caught sight of some sparkling object half hidden in the grass, within reach of the light of the camp-fire.

It was Mako's knife, which he had detached from his neck to cut his dinner up with, for the monkey had now learned to eat meat like his master.

The weapon was within reach of Si's hand, and, extending his arm, he drew it toward him.

Still the chief obstacle remained—Mako.

He would have stabbed him, but he knew that any attempt to approach him would rouse the wakeful animal at once.

Besides, the blow might not be certain, and the noise of a struggle would attract Seawail's attention.

After a little hesitation he hit upon a ruse.

By crawling on his belly he got near enough to the monkey to reach his gun, which he drew softly toward him.

Then he extracted the charge, and filled the barrel with dirt and stones, which he rammed down hard.

Now, even if the monkey woke, he had only his hands to fight with, and, strong as they were, Si Gibbs, with a sharp knife, was equal to them.

Having returned the gun to its former position, Si was about to get up, when Seawail suddenly stopped in his walk and called:

"Mako!"

The monkey jumped up at once and seized his gun.

"Relieve guard!" commanded his master.

Gravely shouldering his weapon, the ape marched out and took our hero's place.

The latter approached the fire, leaving him to commence his rounds.

At this occurrence Si Gibbs uttered a bitter oath and sank back in the grass.

"Fooled again!" he muttered, adding, "But hold on. He will go to sleep. By Jove! this is better yet!"

And with half-closed eyes he watched his intended victim prepare for slumber.

These preparations did not occupy much time, and within ten minutes Seawail's regular breathing showed that he had continued his day's journey into the land of dreams.

Si, who had been watching for this moment, breathlessly now rose to his knees and advanced softly.

He had just reached our hero's side and raised the knife, when a shrill scream, repeated, as it seemed, by scores, if not hundreds of voices, rang out on the night.

At the same time something dropped on Si's shoulder's from the tree under which Seawail had lain down, knocking him over.

As he fell the now thrice-baffled murderer slashed about him with his knife.

He had the satisfaction of feeling the blade enter some yielding object.

Another scream followed, and the other cries now recommenced in a furious chorus.

Seawail had sprung to his feet at the first noise and snatched up his gun, while Mako bounced in within reach of the camp-fire.

"What the deuce does this mean?" cried the former to Si, who had just thrown his victim off and risen.

"I don't know," gasped the villain, pallid and trembling with excitement.

"Where did you get that knife?"

"I picked it up from the grass when that fellow tumbled on top of me."

And he touched the corpse of his late assailant with his foot.

Before more could be said or done the screams were recommenced, and, acquainted as he was with the practices of the country, Seawail recognized them as war-cries.

"We are attacked!" he shouted.

And even as he spoke swarms of naked black bodies came dropping from the trees on every side.

At first sight the adventurers took them for monkeys.

Then they made them out to be human beings of the most diminutive sort.

They tumbled pell-mell, and without observing any order, all sprang to the attack.

Armed with short spears, they piled in on the three travelers in a disorderly mob, rending the air with their piercing screams.

After discharging his gun, Seawail clubbed it and laid about him with a will.

Mako, after a disgusted effort to fire, did likewise, while Si Gibbs, assailed by a dozen at once, had, will ye nill ye, to use his knife though he would rather have been safe in the tallest treetop.

The assailants' numbers were in their favor, but their pygmy stature was the best safeguard of the party attacked.

After stretching a score at least prostrate or lifeless, Seawail dropped his gun, and seizing the nearest one by the ankles, he whirled him about his head and threw him far out over the heads of his comrades.

The man, falling on the bristling heads of the spears, was impaled upon them and stuck there, screaming and squirming in agony.

Inspired by his master's example, Mako seized another opponent in the same way.

Only instead of throwing him away, he converted him into a club.

Gripping his ankles tightly, he struck about him right and left.

The savage thus suddenly converted into a weapon of offense, yelled and struggled, but to no purpose.

He might as well have tried to escape from the jaws of a crocodile as to release himself from the vise-like grasp of the powerful ape.

His comrades, on their part, were dismayed by the prowess of their strange enemy.

Noting this, Seawail likewise converted his nearest neighbor into an animated bludgeon.

This completed the dismay of the assailants, and they commenced to scatter.

Mako and his master followed them, and this pursuit soon converted the retreat into a rout.

And so effectual a rout, too, that within a couple of minutes not a soul of them was to be seen, except the dead and wounded on the field.

There were about a dozen of these latter, whom Mako and Si Gibbs promptly secured.

Seawail, meanwhile, examined them most curiously.

Their average height was about four feet and a half, though there were some who reached almost five feet, and others who did not exceed four.

Their heads were large, black and ugly, perched on such thin necks that it looked as if a sharp nod would break the slender connection off and send the upper attachment flying away.

Their legs and arms, too, were of pipestem-like dimensions, while their puny bodies, which were covered with tattooing that left scarcely an inch of skin visible, exhibited plainly every rib and bone under their dingy hides.

The only dress they wore was a broad strip of matting, woven from dried grass, around their waists, and their weapons were the spears already mentioned, a few flint knives and bows and arrows.

It would have been impossible not to have recognized these curious creatures.

They were members of the Akka tribe, a race of dwarf savages, who have been famous in legend and history since the earliest times.

Mako seemed to regard the little prisoners with boundless delight.

He had at last found human beings smaller than himself, and after binding them to the trees around the camp-fire, he would have taken advantage of his superiority if his master had not commanded him to desist.

Then he seemed to recollect something else.

Taking up his gun, he commenced to investigate it, to find why it had hung fire.

The discovery of the charge which Si had substituted for the explosive one perpiexed him, and he sat looking at the little heap of dirt and pebbles which came tumbling out of the gun-barrel with a bewildered air, which attracted his master's attention.

"What the deuce is up now?" asked Seawail.

Mako mumbled, and pointed from the dirt to his gun, then made a motion of leveling and firing, and shook his head.

Our hero understood him.

"You mean to say that those things came out of the gun?" he said.

Mako nodded.

"But who put them in?"

The ape scratched his head for a minute with half-shut eyes.

Then he uttered a shrill chatter and bounded at Si Gibbs, who had been listening and looking on in much uneasiness.

Hating that gentleman as cordially as he did, Mako naturally ascribed all out-of-the-way occurrences to him.

His master, however, argued with a reasoning mind.

He recollected that Si had had a knife in his hand, and been close to him when the attack of the pygmies had disconcerted the villain's plans, and like a flash the whole affair dawned upon him.

"I thought these accidents were never going to happen again!" he said, sternly, at last.

"Accidents! What accidents?" faltered Mr. Gibbs.

"What accidents?" thundered our hero, furiously. "You murdering scoundrel, take that."

And he gave the cringing assassin a kick in the stomach that sent him flying into the middle of the fire.

Scorched and blistered, he rolled out, only to fall into the hands of Mako.

The latter seized him, and squatting on his chest, calmly proceeded to ram his mouth full of dirt, using a rough stick for a ramrod.

Mr. Gibbs would undoubtedly have been strangled, for Mako pounded away as vigorously as if he had been loading a gun, while Seawail made no move to interfere, when the dim light of dawn, which had now arrived, revealed a strange figure approaching the camp.

This figure was that of a tall man, and as he neared the fire he waved a green branch in token of amity.

Mako caught sight of it, and at once abandoned his victim, who crawled off to relieve himself of his unsavory mouthful.

"Easy does it, neighbor," called a voice in English, as the ape caught up his gun. "Don't be too rash with that there weppin of offense."

And Mako, recognizing the language in which his master habitually spoke to him, lowered his arm, the new-comer stepped boldly into Seawail.

The latter started back with a sharp cry, one more of surprise than alarm, however.

The stranger grinned.

"I see you've sort of flabbergasted," he remarked, blandly. "You don't appear to enjoy the luxury of looking at such works of art as me, do you?"

"I should say I didn't," replied Seawail, with a long whistle of surprise, while Mako examined the new-comer with shrill chatters of admiration, and even Si Gibbs forgot hostilities in his curiosity, and sidled up to the group.

CHAPTER XVI.

INTRODUCING MR. DICK BATTERS, AND TELLING HIS CURIOUS CAREER.

AS the stranger put it, he was really a work of art.

He was a white man of a large and muscular build, attired only in one of the mats such as the captive pygmies wore, and every visible part of his body was covered with the most elaborate tattooing.

Even his face was ornamented with grotesque and curious figures, printed in red and blue, and the very palms of his hands were covered with faint pink tracery.

The captive pygmies, when they saw him, began to chatter to him in a shrill, high tongue, to which he made some, to our ears, unintelligible reply.

Then turning to Seawail, he said:

"Before we do anything else, let me talk business. I come from Bakinda, the King of the Akkas. He attacked you last night, thinking you were a party of hunters from Nimigi trespassing on his

hunting-grounds. When I heard that you were white men I saw that there was some mistake, and undertook to see you and make things right. The king invites you to visit his village, where I can assure you you will be an honored guest."

"I'm perfectly willing," responded our hero. "But will you oblige me by informing me who you are?"

"With pleasure. I was once Dick Batters, of New York. I am now a god."

"A what?"

"A god. The fact of the matter is, these people think I am a spirit descended from the clouds to watch over and protect them. I am really their king, though Bakeda bears the name. They never even kill a goat without consulting me, and my word among them is absolute law."

"I don't think I would hanker after the position of a god if I had to submit to the style of decoration you wear."

"You wouldn't? It is precisely on account of that decoration that I hold my present exalted position," said Dick Batters, laughing. "But come. The *story* is a long one. Do you accept the king's invitation?"

"If you say it's all right, of course I do."

"It is all right, I assure you."

"Very well, then; consider me your guest."

"In that case," remarked Batters, "you might as well cast those fellows loose, and I'll send some of 'em off to carry the news to the king, while the rest scare up a breakfast for us."

Several signed, and the pygmy prisoners having been released, Dick Batters dispatched them on their respective missions.

"And now," he observed, seating himself before the fire, "I suppose you're curious to know all about me?"

"You can bet your life I am. If you'll permit me to say it, you're about the most curious object I ever laid eyes on."

Dick Batters was evidently flattered.

"I'm glad you think so," he said. "That's what I laid myself out to be."

"How do you mean?"

"Simply that I had myself tattooed on purpose."

"The deuce you did!"

"And an elegant job they made of it. I leave it to you if I don't beat the tattooed Turk all hollow."

"You do, indeed. But how did you come to do it?"

"As a speculation."

And composing himself in his seat, the tattooed man began:

"Eight years ago I was canvasseman with the Great Oriental Equescurriculum and Combination of Wonders.

"The show was a first-class one, and made money, till one day we struck a town where a rival concern was exhibiting.

"Our performance was much the best of the two, but, somehow or other, business kept so poor that it scarcely paid for the lights and sawdust.

"We couldn't make out the reason for a long time, till one night I went to the other show, when I tumbled at once.

"Bad as their ring performance was, they had one curiosity that beat all of ours pit together.

"That was a man who was tattooed from head to foot, and whom they called the 'Tattooed Turk.'

"The fellow really was a sight to behold, and it was no wonder that the people put up with a bad show in order to see him, and hear the wonderful tales the showman told about him.

"Of course I knew that, as far as his being a Turk was concerned, it was a fraud, and I determined to find out all about him.

"A couple of nights later, as I was going home, I stumbled on a policeman who was having a drunken man along by the collar, clubbing him for dear life.

"Now, if there is one thing I despise worse than another in this world, it's a policeman.

"Consequently, I wasn't slow to interfere, and in a couple of minutes the cop was taking it easy in the gutter, while I was running his prisoner off.

"I hurried him to my own room, and there, to my joy, found him to be the Tattooed Turk.

"The rum had made him half sober, and grasping my hand, he exclaimed:

"'Hurroo, ye divil! Yer a gintleman, ivery inch of yez.'

"'Hello!' says I; 'I thought you were a Turk!'

"'A Turk, is it?' says he. 'Bad scran to yez, do I lik loike a haythen? Sure they makes me a Turk on the bills, but I'm as good an Orishman as ever kem out of Limerick. Let's have a dhrop o' potteen.'

"We had the drop of potteen, and the Tattooed Turk and myself were sworn friends before morning.

"Between drunkenness and gratitude he made no secret of his history, and I was soon in possession of it.

"He had been a sailor, and was on a voyage to the South Seas in a trader, had committed some act of insubordination, which resulted in his being put in irons.

"In his fury he fell upon the first mate and brained him with his manacles.

"The captain thereupon landed him at Honolulu, which was the nearest port, and turned him over to the American Consul for trial and punishment.

"Escaping from his prison, he managed to get aboard of a trading-schooner, where he stowed away, and was carried to the Samoan Islands.

"He got on a spree there, and the schooner sailed without him.

"The Samoans at that time were yet cannibals, and they made hash out of his companions, but the king had taken a fancy to Dennis Dineen, for that was his name, and interfered to save his life.

"He was given the alternative between being tattooed and becoming one of the Samoan army or being eaten, and, of course, he chose the first.

"When the islands came under the protection of the United States, Denis, who was tired of the humdrum life of the savages, concluded to visit his old haunts, so he applied to the American Consul, who gave him a passage to San Francisco.

"He got on a drunk there, and after having been robbed of all his money, was sent to jail.

"One of the jailers, when he was stripped for the bath which every convict has to take before he enters the prison, noticed his tattooing, and when he was released, this man proposed to him to go into the show-business.

"Denis was dead-broke and jumped at the chance, and in a very little time the whole country rang with accounts of the wonderful sailor who was tattooed from head to heels.

"These came to the ears of the owners of the show he was now with, and they engaged him for five hundred dollars a week to travel with them, made him swear never to open his mouth while on exhibition, and got some drunken newspaper man to write a romantic lecture about him, crammed full of lies as marvelous as they were original.

"So he was rapidly becoming a rich man.

"Now this story set me thinking, and the result of my reflections was that I went to the proprietor of our show.

"'The Tattooed Turk is knocking spots out of our business, sir,' I said.

"'You needn't tell me that,' he replied, snappishly. 'He's ruined it. We're going to close the season to-morrow.'

"'Now, suppose sir,' says I, 'that you had a Tattooed Turk to run against him?'

"'There's no use of supposing,' says he. 'We haven't got one, and there's the end of it.'

"'I'll engage to provide you with one inside of two years, though,' I remarked, and then I unfolded my plan to him.

"The consequence was that they entered into a contract with me to go to the Comoro Islands, where the natives are the most artistic tattooers in the world, and get myself done up in the highest style of the art, warranted to beat the Tattooed Turk into a side-show.

"They were to pay all expenses, and a salary of two thousand five hundred dollars a month to me when I was ready to exhibit.

"Four months later I landed in Madagascar, and went in a canoe to Joanna, the largest of the Comoros, where I had letters to one of the traders.

"He turned me over to an old fellow named Homogo, who was the champion tattooer of the lot, and who consented to polish me off.

"He was seventy years of age, and what he could see of him with sharks' teeth and red and blue pigments nobody else need dream of attempting.

"He bore an unconquerable hatred for the missionaries, who always strove to prevent people from tattooing themselves, consequently injuring his business.

"As for sailors, he despised them.

"The rude and uncouth ornaments they were in the habit of imprinting on their bodies he held in the utmost contempt.

"The work he opened that I bore on my arms a couple of emblems which some schoolfellow had imprinted there years before.

"The venerable torturer made me strip, and the first thing that his eyes lighted on, of course, was these.

"He frowned savagely, and began to jump about like a monkey on an ants' nest.

"'Ho, ho!' says he. 'This Christian has been trying to tattoo himself!'

"'Well, what of it?' says I.

"'What of it?' remarks he. 'Why, what do you mean by disfiguring your body this way? You've got a fine figure and good firm flesh. You ought to be ashamed to spoil it so.'

"He went on while he was examining my form and the texture of my skin with the eyes of a connoisseur.

"'You'll do,' he said, at last, 'in spite of the rude and mishapen ornaments your ignorant friends have disfigured you with. I'll engage to make a masterpiece of you inside of twelve months.'

"'Then, for the Lord's sake! commence,' I exclaimed, 'and let me get out of this heaven-forsaken country.'

"He grinned and muttered something between his teeth, and for a minute I weakened, the old brute looked so malicious.

"But I had made up my mind to rival the Tattooed Turk, and my irresolution speedily vanished.

"Homogo took me in a canoe to a little island where he lived, with no other companions than his wives and wives' and his slaves.

"There he led me to an extensive and quite comfortable house, where he assigned me a room.

"'As soon as you're ready, now, we'll commence,' says he.

"'Commence at once, then,' said I. 'The job's got to be done, and the sooner it is done the better.'

"'Very well, then,' he sneered.

"And clapping his hands, two strong natives entered, seized me, and threw me down on a bamboo frame, where they bound me so that I was immovable.

"Then Homogo, with rapid and skillful fingers, sketched the figures he intended to tattoo on my breast, and began work.

"It would be useless to dwell on my agonies.

"Within an hour I was a bleeding, howling mass of wounds, and so, day after day, my torments continued for a year.

"You ask me why I did not escape? Because I could not.

"Once I contracted with him to tattoo me, I belonged to him body and soul, and he would not release me till he had finished his job.

"I never thought of it, indeed, but a close watch was kept over me, till at the end of the year the old devil said, with a grin:

"'Now, you are done. You are perfect, so fork over the cash and git,' or words to that effect.

"I paid him the five hundred dollars I had promised, got partially even with him by beating him senseless, and then returned to Joanna.

"From there I took passage for the Cape of Good Hope, but the ship was wrecked on the Mozambique coast, and the natives captured us and sold us to some merchants, who started with us into the interior to dispose of us to the King of Nimgi, who, it seems, is fond of white slaves.

"Not far from here they were attacked by the Akkas, and slaughtered to a man.

"The silly little devils, when they saw me, however, believed that I was a great spirit.

"As you may have noticed, they are very fond of tattooing themselves, but my ornamentations beat anything they had ever seen, and they fell down before me and worshiped it."

"So instead of making a fortune at the show business, you're doomed to rule a mob of savage dwarfs," observed Seawall. "There isn't so much money in your scheme, after all."

"Not by too much of that," responded Dick Batters, with a significant look. "I may show you something before we part that will make you change your mind."

Here the pygmies who had been sent to hunt returned with some game, and the party went to work to prepare breakfast.

The fire was commencing to die down, so Mako drove Si Gibbs off into the woods to gather a fresh supply of fuel.

Now, while the miserable miscreant wandered about collecting the fagots, Mako's eyes lighted on a tree in whose side was a large knot-hole, in and out of which a stream of bees was constantly traveling. The ape's eyes glistened at the sight.

He was as fond of honey as any country schoolboy, and the thought of the hidden treasures of the bee-tree made his mouth water.

He dared not attempt to gather them, however, for at the first stroke of a knife which he would have to use to enlarge the entrance to the hive, the inmates would be certain to sally out and assail him furiously.

At this juncture his glance settled on Si Gibbs, who was cursing his luck and picking up the fire-wood scattered around.

Motioning to him to approach, Mako handed him his knife, and, pointing to the knot-hole, commanded him, by signs, to enlarge it.

Without suspicion of the dangerous character of the task, Si, not daring to disobey his monkey task-master, went to work.

At the third blow the shell-like trunk caved in, leaving exposed a large black cavity, filled with honey.

From this cavity issued a swarm of bees, which attacked Si with fiendish fury.

The poor scoundrel uttered a scream of anguish and fright, and then fled, filling the air with howls of dismay.

Of course the bees all followed him, chasing him through the woods to the little creek, beside which the camp was pitched, into which the victim plunged.

Which, meanwhile, had had ample time to do what he wanted.

As soon as Si fled, leading the angry bees after him, the ape, who had watched the success of his cunning plan from a safe distance, removed the comb, streaming with delicious honey, from the hive.

So while our hero was wondering what Si had done to incur the displeasure of the bees, the riddle was solved by Mako appearing in camp, bearing the toothsome dainty robbed from the bee-tree, as his contribution to the breakfast.

"Well, who are alive?" remarked Dick Batters, admiringly; "you're a trump, old fellow!"

And he shook Mako's hand, who responded to the compliment by hopping about and gibbering jeeringly in the swollen face of the unhappy Si, who was squatting in the grass, rocking to and fro and moaning with pain.

[To be continued.]

["Seawall" was commenced in No. 646.]

WILD ROSE AND VIOLET;

OR,

Fun at Mrs. Hawk's.

CHAPTER I.

WILD ROSE.

SEATED beneath a patriarchal elm, with her lap full of wood-flowers, is "Wild Rose," in other words, Rose Royston, heroine number one of my story.

Imagine, then, a young girl, not long past her sixteenth birthday, who had from her fifth year been allowed to roam the woods at her will, until she had grown up as wild and natural as the flowers she culled; as free and graceful in every motion as the birds that carolled over her head, whose notes the clear, ringing tones of her voice rivaled.

She was at that age when the slightness of the girl had not yet developed into the more graceful undulations of womanhood. But she was a genuine child in nature, half promised, ere long, to bring no discredit to her parent, or to need to seek another mother in the fictitious school of art.

Respecting her face and features, I can only say that she was as brown as a gypsy, with a bright, crimson tint in her cheeks that harmonized—as nature's colors always do when left to themselves—exactly with the mass of jet-black hair that fell in wild luxuriance just wherever it pleased; and a pair of glorious, brown eyes that seemed almost too large for her face, and which had caused certain hypercritical persons to declare, as the fearless, unshrinking orbs fringed with their long, dark lashes fastened themselves on them, that, "the gypsy-looking girl was all eyes," though, perhaps, at the same time, they would have given half they possessed to have had such a pair in their own heads.

Thus much of my Wild Rose's personal qualifications.

Her moral attributes we need not pause to discuss; they will unfold themselves as we go along.

Her dress was one of the most homely description—thoroughly strong and serviceable, and frightfully unfashionable; and then on her small, well-shaped feet she wore knitted woolen stockings, and thick leather boots. Only fancy, what a picture of a heroine!

Rose had seated herself for a few moments, but she was up again directly, and throwing back her hair from her face by shaking her head, hurried on to Grey Hollow, where she dwelt.

It was not long before she arrived in sight of Grant's cottage.

David Grant and his wife had grown old in the service of the Royston family; and when reverses of fortune came and the family declined, they clung to the ruin, serving the younger branches as faithfully as they had their elders.

Old Squire Royston left two sons, Benjamin and Ernest. Of the former of these, who was a sailor, nothing had been heard for many years; and when his younger brother, Ernest, and his wife were carried off by a sudden and violent epidemic, David Grant and his dame, out of pure love to the dead, took to themselves their only child and shared their humble pittance with the little orphan.

Very dear was she to the old folks—as dear as if she had been their own flesh and blood, and this affection was returned with all the earnestness of a fresh, warm heart.

For twelve years she had been the life and light of the little homestead of Grey Hollow, and that long time had seemed to Rose a period of unmixed happiness, with scarcely the shadow of a cloud to dim it. But now all this was about to be altered.

When she reached home she found an open traveling carriage at the gate.

This was a vehicle seldom seen in that secluded spot, and Rose was surprised at the imposing equipage.

CHAPTER II.

TRANSPLANTED.

THE first thing she noticed on entering was the tall, melancholy expression, and the tearful eyes of her old guardians, and this was sufficient to enlist all her sympathies.

"What's the matter, granny, dear? What's the matter?" she asked, earnestly.

A few murmured ejaculations she could not understand, interrupted with sobs, were the only replies she received.

"Do tell me what's the matter with you both?" she again entreated of her guardians.

Still there was no answer. But she noticed that the dame threw a mournful look of appeal, as if to some one behind her.

She turned and found herself confronted by a stout, elderly gentleman, with a ruddy complexion, and a very bald head.

This gentleman, a perfect stranger to her, was attired in a voluminous pilot-coat of blue cloth, buttoned across a massive chest, and trowsers of the same kind.

And there was something in the healthy bronzed hue of his features that bespoke him a member of the nautical profession; and in his manner and bearing that seemed to say he had been accustomed to command.

As was customary with Rose when encountering a stranger, she now opened her bright brown orbs to their fullest extent, bringing all their power to bear upon the nautical-looking gentleman, who, in his turn, stood with his hands in his pockets, regarding her reflectively, and in silence.

But this did not last long, and Rose having concluded her examination, removed her gaze, and approaching her afflicted guardians, said, bluntly, as she pointed to the unknown intruder:

"Who's he?"

The subject of this inquiry answered for himself.

"I am your Uncle Benjamin, miss."

Rose, who had heard from her foster-parents that such a person had once existed, dreamily reechoed the words:

"*My* Uncle Benjamin!"

"Yes!" he reiterated, emphatically; "your Uncle Benjamin—your father's brother! Captain Benjamin Royston."

But even this important piece of information caused her no emotion save as connected with the old folks, who, at the associations it awakened, could not restrain a few tears and hysterical sobs in spite of all their efforts.

But this was too much for Rose, who loved them both too dearly to be able to endure the sight of their grief, and throwing her arms around them, she inquired: "Has he done *anything* to you?"

The indignant flash which she discharged at her nautical relative, as she put the question, conveyed far more than words, and caused the dame to exclaim, somewhat apprehensively:

"No, no, my dear child; 'e a-done naught to we. It be about thee we be frettin'."

"About me, granny? Why?"

"Why, the gentleman be thy fayther's brother, an' 'e be coom to tak' thee away an' make a lady o' thee."

"I won't go with him!" said Rose, in the most decided manner possible.

"You won't, eh, miss?" echoed Captain Royston, beginning to perceive that his niece was inclined to be mutinous, and getting naturally rather red in the face at the bare idea; "you won't, won't you?"

"No, I won't!" she repeated, her beautiful eyes flashing indignantly; "not for you or any one. You won't let me go, dear granny, will you?" she asked, appealingly.

"I be afeard we can't help ourselves," murmured the dame, after a moment, wiping her eyes with her apron.

The aspect of affairs was beginning to verge upon the pathetic—a state of things which Captain Benjamin particularly objected to.

"Come, come!" he exclaimed, suddenly, "this is all ridiculous nonsense. Look here, Rose!"—he called her by that familiar name, by way of experiment—"can you read?"

"Of course I can," was the sharp reply.

"Very good; then read that—read it aloud."

As he spoke, he placed in her hand a paragraph cut from one of the daily papers.

Rose, swallowing down as much of her emotion as she could, read in a tolerably firm voice as follows:

"TO PARENTS AND GUARDIANS.—Seminary for Young Ladies.—Mrs. Penelope Hawk begs to inform parents and guardians who may be desirous of placing their daughters or *protégées* in an establishment where the advantages of a refined and strictly moral education is blended with the domestic comforts and social charms of a happy home, that she has a vacancy at present for two pupils. The house and extensive grounds are situated in a delightfully retired locality, the rural solitude of which is admirably calculated to induce concentration of the youthful mind upon its various studies, and to afford free scope for the development of the reflective powers. Apply to Mrs. Penelope Hawk, Meditation House, Ponderwell Mead, Acton, near London. Terms, fifty guineas per annum (payable quarterly, in advance). Every accomplishment included. No extras.

"N. B.—Mrs. P. H. is proud to inform those honoring her with their confidence and patronage that she is assisted in the delightful but arduous responsibilities of training the future wives and mothers of England by her two daughters, the Misses Priscilla and Prudence Hawk."

"There!" ejaculated Captain Royston, triumphantly, "what do you think of that?"

"I don't like it at all," was the candid reply.

"Don't you?" returned the captain, tapping the lid of his snuff-box rather impatiently; "then let me tell you, you must like it. I've had an interview with Mrs. Hawk, and paid a quarter in advance, and—a—a—a—in short—go you must; so pack up your things at once."

Not an inch did Rose stir.

"I'm very happy here," she said, doggedly; "and I don't mean to go, and if you try to make me, I'll run away into the woods and hide myself."

She made a motion as she spoke toward the door.

"Stop!" shouted Captain Benjamin; "why, this is rank mutiny. Harkyee, Miss Firebrand, do you understand that I'm your father's brother?"

"I heard you say you were," returned Rose, bluntly; "but my father's dead, and my mother, too, and I never saw you before."

"Oh, 'ees 'e be your uncle, my dear," interposed the dame; "theer be no doubt o' that."

"Of course there's no doubt of that," cried Benjamin Royston, emphatically; "and therefore you ought to treat me with confidence and a—a—respect—well—for your dead parents' sake."

"I can't recollect them," answered the young girl, in a grieved but still impatient tone; "these are *my parents*," she continued, warmly, turning to old John and his wife, who, with tear-dimmed eyes, were listening to all; "I love them and want go others. They have kept me so long as I can remember, and have always been good and kind to me; and now they're growing old they'll expect me to stay and take care of them. Don't ask me to leave them, because I won't go; I can't."

And having thus spoken, she rushed to the old couple, and throwing her arms round them, burst into a passionate fit of crying.

Captain Benjamin was particularly puzzled and perplexed, and perhaps—being himself a very kind-hearted man to the main, moved—as he stood watching her. She recalled to his mind the excitable, impetuous temper of his brother Ernest; and he muttered to himself:

"As like her father as two peas!"

But violent grief, like violent rain, does not last long. By degrees the sobs grew less violent and at length ceased altogether. But she still remained with her head resting on her granny's bosom, and her arms clasped round her neck.

Uncle Ben thought it a good opportunity to drop in a word.

"There, now, you're better a great deal, I can see," he said, in a more conciliatory tone; "after a storm comes a calm—eh? and now suppose you go and get ready; you know you must be educated."

"So I am educated!" burst out Rose, impetuously. "Dear old Solomon Wise teaches me better than ever that Mrs. Hawk could."

"How do you know that?" inquired her uncle.

"Because I do," was the very feminine, if not altogether satisfactory, response; "I'm sure I shouldn't like her, and I could never learn anything of anybody I didn't like. Mrs. Hawk! Ugh! I should fancy she was some bird of prey, with claws and a beak."

The captain screwed up his mouth and tried to look very serious and solemn. But the attempt was a failure; and turning away under the pretence of taking a pinch of snuff, he had a quiet laugh to himself. His niece's idea of the Acton preceptress was so ridiculously near the truth, that it quite tickled him, and it took him three liberal applications to his snuff-box before he could recover anything like a proper control. This happy condition being at length arrived at, he continued:

"Mrs. Hawk is a—a—very accomplished woman; of great attainments and very experienced in teaching the—a—young idea how to—a—steer—shoot, I mean. You will meet a great many young ladies on board, that is, at her establishment, who will be your companions. There you'll learn everything for a young girl to know, including geography and the use of the globes, and I can't see for the life of me why you shouldn't be as happy as—a—a—the rest of the pupils. But there, whether or not, I've secured your berth and go you must. It's not of the least use your appealing to those old friends of yours; they can't stop you, even if they would."

David Grant and his dame looked up wistfully at their pet and shook their heads in mournful confirmation of this assertion.

"Well, if you can't help me, Kit will!" cried Rose, desperately. "He won't let me go away, now."

"Oi should think not, indeed!" responded a voice from without; and at the same moment that individual rolled in at the door. He was a thick-set, heavy-looking lump of a lad, with a pancake face, a shock-head of dusty-colored hair, and a strong country dialect. But he was one of those's particular friends, and enjoyed her confidence, whilst he in return regarded her as something very little short of an angel.

As soon as he called, Rose flew to his side.

"Oh, Kit, I'm so glad you're come!" she exclaimed, eagerly. "You won't let me be taken away, will you?"

"Tain't loikely," Kit responded, throwing his arm around her; "oo wants to tak' ee?"

"That old gentleman there," returned Rose, indicating her relative. "He's my Uncle Benjamin, and he says I'm to go with him to London, miles and miles away."

"Oh, ah, that be a foine idear!" exclaimed Kit, with a laugh of rustic irony. "Oi should loike to see 'im tak' ee."

As he said this he glared at the captain with an expression akin to an angry bulldog. This defiant proceeding brought the wrath of the naval commander to a climax, and raising his bamboo cane, he laid it vigorously across Kit's shoulders, who ran howling from the door.

Then, bringing down his weapon with a bang on the table, he shouted to David Grant and his dame:

"It's time this nonsense should come to an end. I've had enough of it, and if you persist in countenancing my niece in her opposition to my wishes, I warn you I shall summon the assistance of the law. D'ye understand? The law!"

The violence of the captain had been sufficiently startling, but the term "law" seemed awfully ominous and full of unknown terrors to the old folks, who murmured the apprehensions they could not conceal.

Rose, finding her guardians giving way, no longer resisted. Kit having been summarily dismissed, there was no one to help her. And so, at length, with a sob of bitter grief, she consented to leave her happy old home.

"Ah, that's something like!" exclaimed Uncle Ben, his good humor restored at once by the announcement. "I'm delighted to think you've come to your senses at last. And now, my dear, get ready at once."

There was not much to be done, or any lengthened preparations to make.

All that Rose Royston did was to bathe her face in water and smooth her tresses—so far as they could be smoothed—and array herself, sighing all the while, in her Sunday frock, hat and boots.

Her every-day garments were packed away in a small box, which Kit's artistic hand had painted a bright green, and with a miscellaneous, and not particularly numerous assortment of underclothing.

This being locked and corded, Rose was pronounced ready. Ready, but never since the world began was any one less willing.

But there was no appeal, and when the captain, having seen the luggage safely stowed away in the boat, shouted "All hands aboard!" Rose tore herself away from the embrace of her kind old guardians and hurried to the carriage, into which she sprang with a kind of desperation.

"All right!" shouted Uncle Ben.

Bang went the door, crack went the whip, and the vehicle rolled onward.

Poor Rose looked from the window and waved her hand, and tried to smile upon her friends. But her eyes were blinded with tears. Everything for the time looked dark. She had left behind her all she loved, and was going, for the first time in her life, to dwell in a strange place, amongst strangers.

(To be continued.)

DRIVING.

THERE have been "whips" from days immemorial. Godheads drove their coaches earlier even than men paddled their own canoes. Apollo, god of the sun, drove daily his chariot "Eothen" from the east to the gardens of the Hesperides (the "place to spend a happy day"), at a time when Poseidon owned the only other rival team. Among humanity Pelops ran a chariot race against Œnomaus for the hand of the fair Hippodameia (daughter of the latter), and won fortunately, through the treachery of Myrtilus (the groom of Œnomaus) who drew the linch-pins of his master's coach, and so upset him and broke his neck in the heat of his struggle—a dirty trick to play one's intended father-in-law. But be it as it may, Pelops prospered, married Hippodameia, and the gods came down to the banquet. What may have been the manners and customs of mankind with regard to horse-flesh before the Deluge we know not; but very soon after that date chariots and pairs were common commodities to all the grandees of the cities of the plains, of Egypt and Mesopotamia. Harness seems to have taken precedence of the saddle for many generations; and in many countries that could boast of war-chariots the art of riding seems to have been at a discount.

War-chariots were used in Israel in the days of Jehu, and earlier, yet Rabshakeh taunts Hezekiah that he will give him a thousand horses, if he be able for his part "to set riders upon them." Not only lack of horsemanship, but the interests of personal safety, had much to do with the precedence of the chariot over the saddle. The former was the safer means for prosecuting warfare. The chieftain was less exposed in his car, and could make use of a shield and armor-bearer in addition. As classical ages progressed, chariot-racing became a standard institution of Greece. Not exactly our idea of a satisfactory test of speed and endurance. The course was essentially a flying one. A horrible statue—Taraxippos, or the horse-frightener—stood in the first quarter of the course; the horses were no blinkers, so no wonder if they shied. At the end of the ground was the "meta," or turning pillar, which was the scene of many a spill, and fatal accident to boot. That accidents were more frequent than was necessary, even under such circumstances, may be assumed when we consider the style of driving of the period: instead of holding their horses well in hand, and feeling their mouths with body well upright.

War-chariots disappeared from the ranks of the Roman armies, but were in vogue among ancient Britons. As civilization progressed, horsemanship made rapid strides, but locomotion on wheels was at a discount; the state of the roads forbade it, and apart from the slowness of such a means of transit, the non-invention of springs made coaches no great luxury in swampy, boulder-strewn tracks. Ladies of distinction were wont to make their journeys on horseback, unless the distance was within the range of litter carriage. Coaches made their appearance only on state occasions, in the few better-paved thoroughfares. When stage conveyances first began to make their appearance, they were piloted by postillions in the saddle, and not by a driver from a box-seat. The journey from London to Edinburgh was advertised to be accomplished, "D.V.," in a fortnight. Even in this century it was a journey of days from New York to Philadelphia. Such a conveyance as that of any magnate traveling with his family would not essay a journey without the attendance of a wheelwright to repair springs, axles, and wheels as fast as they gave way in the rut-grooved highways of the day. Ordinary merchandize was still carried on pack-horses; and pack roads, straight from point to point, still exist in the rough, though modern engineering has taught roads to wind round hills to facilitate draught. But with MacAdam a new era was inaugurated; roads were rendered firm and light of draught, and from that date conveyances on wheels made rapid strides, and became in time within the reach of every man who was sufficiently well-to-do to keep his beast of burden.

There is now no branch of a man's outdoor education of greater importance, not only to himself, but also to others, than that of an ability to "handle the ribbons"; and the majority of ladies of ordinary physique, who have had opportunities of learning the art, would not like to confess themselves unequal to the task of driving a quiet pony. And yet, though so large a proportion of society can boast a smattering of the science, there is no pursuit in which perfection is proportionately so rarely attained.

(To be continued.)

WILD ROSE AND VIOLET.—"'THAT OLD GENTLEMAN THERE,' RETURNED ROSE, INDICATING HER RELATIVE. 'HE'S MY UNCLE BENJAMIN, AND HE SAYS I'M TO GO WITH HIM TO LONDON, MILES AND MILES AWAY.'"—SEE PAGE 37.

THREE MERRY BOYS:

Their Adventures at School.

CHAPTER XVII.

(Continued from page 14.)

THE *Sure and Certain* was now returning to the beach, in spite of all efforts of the young navigators to the contrary, and a grim smile settled on Titus Salt's face as he picked up a tough piece of tarred rope.

"Salt, ahoy," Harry Walpole cried out; "how much do you intend to give us for saving your son from a watery grave?"

"I'll give 'ee summat, and no mistake," Titus roared back; "kick 'em, William, kick 'em."

"I can't, hyther," the distressed boy shrieked. "They've been and gone and tied my ankles."

Maryiar said nothing, but picking up a flat piece of board about two feet long, she folded her arms and waited the coming of the *Sure and Certain*. That graceful craft, as it tired of her live cargo, suddenly swung round broadside to the freshening wind, and grounded, fell over on her side, and shot the boys out.

William was helpless. He was tied to the mast, and now his nose, and sometimes the whole of his head, was in the water, and his shrieks were fearful to listen to.

Titus Salt dashed into the water and released his son in an instant, allowing most of the boys to escape, but Maryiar was on the alert, and did fearful execution with that board, and Titus, coming to her aid, made the rope's-end crack again.

But at last they all—save one—got clean away, and scampering up the cliff, derided Titus to such an extent that the old fisherman nearly exploded with rage. In the hurry and scurry Tony Limpback had tumbled down. As the spider pounces upon a fly, so Maryiar swooped down on him, and holding his mouth to prevent him shrieking for assistance, she bore him swiftly away to a retired spot.

"William," said Titus Salt, "we will go and help thy mother."

"All right, fayther," William replied, cutting a caper. "T'other boys won't come, will they?"

"They'll come as soon as they've missed the varmint thy mother took, so let us make haste."

As Titus spoke a yell of mortal agony arose, and running up-the beheld Maryiar settling a rather long account with Tony Limpback.

She had him tucked well under her left arm, and still armed with the piece of board, she smote her victim often and with great precision.

"Will, you annoy my William again?" she cried. "Will you (whack) make that (whack) poor boy's life (whack) a misery (whack) to him?"

Whack, whack, whack!

Mr. Makemsmart's promising pupils, led by the Three Merry Boys, were coming down the cliff to the rescue, and in a few minutes Tony Limpback was free.

"You are a nice lot," the victim moaned, as he sat down and wriggled. "Why didn't you come before?"

"For the very simple reason that we did not know where to find you," Walpole replied; "but at last we were led by the sound of the slaps."

"They went off like pistol-shots," Tony groaned, "and I'm red-hot all over."

"Never mind," Willie Howard said; "there are worse misfortunes—at any rate, we have had some fun."

"And I have had to suffer for it," Tony groaned. "It's just my luck."

"I never knew such a selfish fellow," Mark Philo said. "Why, you never take anything in good part."

"I haven't a good part about me," Tony replied, making a very wry face. "I'm a jelly from head to foot, and feel so mixed that I don't know which are my hands or which are my feet."

"Think of the glorious revenge you will be able to have on the Saits," said Mark Philo, "and let that content you."

Tony Limpback ground his teeth, but after a while he got up and limped after his companions. They met Job Langford on their way back. He was a most piteous object.

"Take me some where!" Job Langford gasped; "I feels as if there was a thunderstorm goin' on in my innards. Oh, ain't I bad!"

"We must really take him to a medical man," Harry Walpole said. "If anything should happen we might be prosecuted as accessories after the fact."

Jonah Slapdasher knocked his hat over his eyes and shed bitter tears of repentance.

Several of the boys went in search of a hurdle, which they brought, and Job Langford, as limp as a damp rag, was lifted in it and brought into the town. Everybody knows how a crowd gathers.

Before the boys arrived there was not a soul to be seen in the quiet street, but in less than a minute there were at least a hundred men, women and children following the litter.

The doctor's house was reached at last, and Harry Walpole knocked at the door.

"Is Doctor Cuttem in?" Harry Walpole asked of the servant who appeared.

"Yes."

"Tell him a man has met with a serious accident, and requires his assistance at once."

Doctor Cuttem ordered the patient into his dispensary, and before seeing the patient he had a few words with Harry Walpole.

The young scapegrace told the medical man that nothing ailed Job but rather a heavy fall, the result of heavy drinking, and Doctor Cuttem's face fell a little, as he had hoped for a long job.

"I'll soon put him right," the doctor said, viciously. "There is nothing like a dose of stomach-pump in such a case as this."

The boys who had carried Job had placed him in a chair, where he sat nodding his head, as if he wanted to go to sleep.

Doctor Cuttem shook him up, felt his pulse, and then produced a strange-looking instrument, something like a curiously-contrived garden syringe.

"Will ere you going to do it?" Job gasped, as the doctor bore down on him. "I don't want to have any of my teeth taken out."

"Hold your tongue!" Doctor Cuttem said, imperatively. "You have come here to be made well, and you must do what I tell you. Now then, open your mouth, or I shall have to use force."

"I won't!" Job shrieked. "I ain't goin' to have that beastly-looking thing thrust down my throat."

"I must ask you to assist me," Doctor Cuttem said, turning to the boys. "Put the patient on the floor, and hold him as gently as possible, but do not let him get up."

"We will not, sir," said Bertie Baldwin. "Now, Langford, don't be obstinate." "What this kind gentleman is going to do is for your good."

"I don't care," Job cried, struggling frantically. "There ain't nothin' the matter with me, and I ain't goin' to be 'sperimented on against my will."

"Down with him!" Doctor Cuttem cried; and Job went down on the floor as flat as a pancake.

The operation was soon over, and Job Langford was at last released.

"I'll have the law of you!" he cried, shaking his fist under the doctor's nose. "Give me somethin' to drink. I feel like a heuzzy beer-barrel!"

"My charge," said Doctor Cuttem, rubbing his hands softly, "is half a guinea, which you will please pay me at your earliest convenience."

"If I pay a single farden, may I be busted!" Job roared. "A likely thing, certainly, that I'm goin' to pay for bein' turned hinside hout!"

And Job, without the slightest warning, hit Doctor Cuttem in the middle of his waistcoat and made for the door. The boys let him go, and raised the doctor, who was in a corner, smiling in a sickly fashion.

"Where does that man live?" he spluttered. "I'll—I'll—I'll—"

He could say no more, but rushed at the open window and put his head out.

"I say," roared a man from the street. "Wot are you up to?"

"You shouldn't get in the way, then," Doctor Cuttem replied, through his handkerchief. "You have no right to stand on my doorstep."

The man said something the reverse from complimentary as he moved away, and the boys, having taken leave of Doctor Cuttem, went their way also.

The rest of the day passed away without anything important taking place, for the boys were too much engaged in talking about the events just recorded to think of mischief, and at night they retired to bed without even the excitement of a bolster fight.

About midnight they were disturbed by a cats' chorus, and Tony Limpback flung three soap-dishes and another boy's pair of boots at the disturbers, but they returned to the same spot again in a few minutes, and lifting up their sweet voices, made sleep impossible.

"See if I don't settle them to-morrow," Tony growled, as he got into bed. "Hark at the beasts."

"They are talking politics, I suppose," Mark Philo said. "Here would be a rare chance for a sporting pieman; he might blend amusement and profit at the same time."

"This is awful," Walpole cried, rubbing his eyes and yawning. "They beat the Christmas minstrels hollow. Why on earth should they make a happy hunting-ground of our playground? Whish, you brutes."

"Oh, you may whish!" said Tony Limpback; "I'll cure them of this game to-morrow."

"What will you do?"

"Blow the lot into atoms," Tony said. "I wonder if Mr. Makemsmart can hear them?"

"He must be a very heavy sleeper if he cannot," Walpole replied. "Listen! He is throwing something at them."

There was a smashing sound, a wild and prolonged yell, and then all was still.

Tony Limpback kept his notion of destroying the cats to himself, determined to surprise his companions by producing the bodies of the feline howlers.

He went to a gunsmith's and hired an old fashioned musket, which he loaded carefully with peas and lumps of saltpetre.

He then purchased a dead chicken in its feathers, and returned to the school full of confidence.

Secreting his treasures, Tony bored a hole in the door of the outhouse, fixed a pole in the ground, and tying the dead chicken to it, retired with the blunderbuss to wait the result of his schemes.

He was not kept long in suspense.

In less than ten minutes there were no less than twenty cats yelling round the bait, and Mr. Makemsmart's pet poodle also arrived on the spot to see what was going on.

And alas, and a-lack-a-day, Mr. Writher came too.

Tony could not see, as the barrel of the musket fitted the hole completely, and at the very moment that the usher appeared to disperse the yelling tribe he pulled the trigger.

There was a frightful report.

Mr. Makemsmart's fat poodle rolled over on its pretty little back, the cats flew into the air, Tony Limpback stood on his head for a few seconds, and Mr. Writher leapt three feet into the air, and opened his mouth as if suddenly afflicted with lockjaw.

He was so stung with peas, and so full of saltpetre dust, that he felt as if he had tumbled into a tank of stinging nettles pickled with strong brine. He did not know what really had happened, but roaring like a madman, he dashed into the house.

Mr. Makemsmart was coming down-stairs as Mr. Writher was going up, and they collided.

Mr. Makemsmart struck Mr. Writher in his agony, and then, seizing him by the hair, bumped his head against the wall.

"Don't," the usher yelled. "Something has exploded in the outhouse, and I'm shot."

"Shot!" cried Mr. Makemsmart. "Where? I see no blood or signs of wounds."

"I am shot in a place where I cannot show you just now," Mr. Writher said. "Oh, verily! this is extremely painful."

Mr. Makemsmart rushed to the scene of the catastrophe, and, on kicking open the outhouse door, found Tony reclining on his back and gazing placidly at the ceiling.

"You young villain!" Mr. Makemsmart roared. "Get up, and deliver yourself up to the police. You have shot Mr. Writher!"

"He isn't a cat," Tony murmured, vaguely. "Take me away; the earth is going round! Where's the gun, and how many did I kill?"

"The boy is mad!" the schoolmaster gasped; "he is as mad as a March hare!"

"Were there any hares about?" Tony remarked, faintly. "If they are dead, we can have them for dinner."

"You will get something extremely warm for dinner," Mr. Makemsmart hissed. "Come, with me, you murderous young scoundrel!"

Tony now began to wake up to the fact that something had gone wrong, and when the truth dawned upon him at last, he turned sick and faint, and clung to Mr. Makemsmart.

DRIVING.—PROPER STYLE OF HOLDING THE REINS.

"Is he dead?" he said. "Oh, sir! is he dead?"

"Not quite," Mr. Makemsmart replied, "but very near. I cannot shield you from justice. Would that I could, but it is impossible."

Poor Tony felt ready to sink into the earth, and scalding tears came into his eyes.

"I didn't mean to do it," he said. "It was a pure accident. Oh, sir, sir! I never thought for a moment that it would come to this!"

They reached the house, Mr. Makemsmart being really alarmed, and Tony much more so, with visions of a judge and jury floating before his eyes.

"Where is Mr. Writher?" the schoolmaster demanded of a servant.

"He's roiling about the floor in your room," the girl replied. "And his howls is awful," the girl said. "Oh, sir! do make haste and see what is the matter!"

Mr. Makemsmart hauled Tony up the stairs in the most relentless style, and found that the girl had spoken no more than the truth, for Mr. Writher was curled up under the table, kicking most frantically.

"Be calm, my dear sir, be calm," Mr. Makemsmart said, soothingly.

"Be calm!" Mr. Writher responded. "Do you think you could be calm with about a pound of saltpetre in you? Oh! merciful powers, this agony is beyond human endurance!"

"Behold your work!" Mr. Makemsmart cried, tragically, to Tony. "I hope and trust that after I have flogged you soundly you will take this lesson to heart."

"All I can say is that I am very sorry," Tony replied, much relieved at seeing that the usher was still in the land of the living. "I hope he will soon get well."

"It will take a week for the saltpetre to melt," Mr. Writher groaned. "I must walk about, or roll."

CHAPTER XVIII.

HARRY WALPOLE QUARRELS WITH MR. WRITHER—A SCENE IN THE SCHOOLROOM—TONY LIMPBACK HAS REASONS TO REJOICE.

MR. WRITHER'S sufferings must have been fearful.

At night his groans could be heard all over the house like some restless spectre repenting of its bad deeds during lifetime, and all day long he walked about as if he had a poker down his back.

But at last the pain wore away, and Mr. Writher made up his mind that Tony Limpback should not live in peace while he remained under that roof, and a most wretched and miserable life that youth had. But Tony was like an April day—a combination of smiles and tears.

At one moment he was down in the very depths of despair, and laughing heartily the next.

But he was never happy in the schoolroom, for the usher gave him heavy tasks, and delighted in seeing him flogged when he failed.

One morning, Tony, thoroughly disheartened, dropped his head down on the desk and sobbed as if his heart would break.

"What is the matter, old boy?" Harry Walpole asked. "Can I help you in any way?"

"It's the same old story," Tony Limpback replied; "that beast, Writher, is down on me again. This is Wednesday, and a half-holiday, and I am to be kept in because I can't get through with that confounded Euclid bosh."

"Here, give me the book and I will soon work it up for you," Harry said. "Dry your eyes. Don't let him see you cry or he will think that you are afraid of him."

"Walpole!" Mr. Writher cried, "what are you doing?"

"That is very easy to see," Harry replied. "Nothing."

"Stand out!" Mr. Writher said, turning almost black in the face with passion. "How dare you speak to me in that way?"

"There is no harm in speaking the truth."

Mr. Writher almost tumbled off his stool, and running full tilt at the youngster, he aimed an open-handed blow at his head.

Mr. Makemsmart was just entering the room, and as Harry ducked to avoid the blow the schoolmaster took it full on his fat cheeks.

Mr. Writher's arms fell to his side, and his breath came thick, as the schoolmaster retreated down the staircase at the rate of forty-five miles an hour.

If a thunderbolt had caught Mr. Makemsmart on the tip of the nose he could not have looked more surprised after he had crawled up the staircase and re-entered the schoolroom.

"In the name of all that is wonderful, what did you do that for?" he gasped, holding his nose, from which a ruby stream was flowing.

"I—I—I could not help it," Mr. Writher stammered. "I aimed at Walpole."

"I told you not to punish the boys without my permission, did I not?" Mr. Makemsmart growled. "If this sort of thing occurs again we shall part."

The usher looked very crestfallen as he returned to his desk, but he turned such eyes on Harry Walpole as boded the boy no good.

What made him more uncomfortable than Mr. Makemsmart's anger was the fact that the boys were chuckling and grinning with delight, and it was not until the schoolmaster had roared silence three times at the top of his voice that something like order was restored.

"Every boy in his place," Mr. Makemsmart shouted, "or I will punish the whole school. Now, Walpole, what is the cause of this disturbance between you and Mr. Writher?"

"He treats Limpback in the most disgraceful style," Walpole replied, "and takes advantage of every trifle to make him unhappy. It is a shame, and there is not a boy here but what will say the same."

"Ahem!" Mr. Makemsmart said, coughing behind his hand; "Mr. Writher is my assistant, and I have always had reason to place entire confidence in him, but I will give this charge my attention."

Mr. Writher's sleek and sickly pale face turned a brilliant green as he rose to his feet.

"If I am to be insulted and defied by a few boys," he said, "I agree with what you said, sir. We had better part."

This was exactly what Mr. Makemsmart did not want.

He had no wish to part with his usher, because the man was cheap, and would do anything without a murmur.

"Well, well," the schoolmaster said, testily, "you can do as you like, but you will live to repent the day you leave my establishment. If the boys insult you, tell me, and I will thrash them soundly. We will now resume our studies, if you please."

"You had better look out, Harry," Tony Limpback said to Walpole, as the boys were strolling about the playground. "It was awfully good of you to take my part; but I don't want you to get into a row through me. Writher looked at you like a demon. He means mischief."

"He will find that two can play at that game," Walpole replied, flushing crimson, as he clinched his fists. "The mean, pitiful hound. I long to meet him in open warfare and punch his head soundly."

"I say, you fellows," Bertie cried, coming up and slapping his chums on the back, "we might have an awful lark to-night. Mr. Makemsmart is going to town."

"Hurrah!" Harry Walpole cried; "but are you sure there's no mistake, old boy?"

"It is as true as you are standing there," Baldwin replied. "I heard him tell Mrs. Nudgebam to pack his portmanteau."

"Oh, ain't this jolly?" Limpback said, cutting a caper. "Won't we take it out of Writher? Oh, no, not at all."

"Don't say too much about it," Mark Philo said, coming up. "Remember the old saying, that walls have ears."

Mr. Makemsmart said nothing of his intended visit and Mr. Writher kept it a secret, as he knew full well that he would lose all command over the youngsters if Mr. Makemsmart's absence became known.

Mr. Makemsmart slipped out of the house, fondly believing his departure unobserved; but could his eyes have penetrated through the blinds, he would have beheld a row of youngsters on their hands and knees watching him narrowly.

He had scarcely turned the corner and entered the street leading to the station when a wild and frantic cheer arose.

Mr. Writher heard it and trembled.

"They know he is gone," he groaned, "and this place will be a perfect bedlam to-night. I have the greatest mind in the world to run away and leave the place to take care of itself."

He put his head out of the door as the boys came clattering down the stairs, and asked them what they had been making a noise about.

"Did you hear it?" Baldwin said, looking the picture of innocence. "Very sorry, I am sure. I hope it did not disturb Mr. Makemsmart."

"They do not know that he is gone," Mr. Writher thought, heaving a sigh of relief.

"Don't do it again," he said. "If you must make a noise, do it in the open air."

A jolly time those boys had that afternoon.

Once loose, there was no keeping them within bounds, and the tradesmen gazed in horror, and trembled as the promising juveniles scampered through the streets.

They sought high and low for Salt, Soker and Langford; but those gentlemen could not be found.

Even Policeman Gooch deserted his usual beat, and bought a pound of filberts to crack in a more peaceful clime.

It was not until twilight had given way to darkness that the boys returned, and found Mr. Writher pacing up and down, looking as savage as a bear with a sore head.

"Mr. Makemsmart will not trouble himself about you to-night," he said; "but you may look out for squalls to-morrow."

"Thank you for the information," Harry Walpole replied; "it will prepare us. Has the gong sounded for tea?"

"Has the gong sounded for tea?" Mr. Writher repeated. "You know very well that it is half an hour over the usual time. Mrs. Nudgebam was on the point of ordering the things to be cleared away when you came in. You deserve to be sent to bed hungry."

Mercy on me, how those boys did carry on!

"These boys will drive me mad," Mr. Writher said, rumpling his hair all over his head, as the last of the youngsters condescended to go to bed. "Boys! I don't believe they are mortal."

"You have no command over them whatever," Mrs. Nudgebam replied, wiping her heated face, "and I believe that Mr. Makemsmart is afraid of them at times."

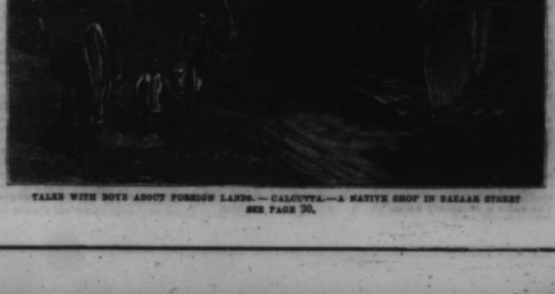
"Hark!" the usher gasped. "I knew what this would end in. They will bring the house down!"

"I hear a sound like the smashing of crockery," Mrs. Nudgebam said, turning pale. "Hadn't you better go up and speak to them?"

"If I do, they will only jeer at me," Mr. Writher replied. "Oh, that Mr. Makemsmart were here!"

A mad bolster-fight was going on in the largest room.

At last the din became so great that Mr. Writher could not bear it.



TALKS WITH BOYS ABOUT FOREIGN LANDS.—CALCUTTA.—A NATIVE SHOP IN BAZAAR STREET

SEE PAGE 30.

Seizing his candlestick, he rushed to his own room, and, throwing himself in his clothes, on the bed, buried his head in the pillows and groaned in impotent fury.

The noise ceased after a while, and satisfied that the boys had gone to bed, he fell into a troubled sleep.

He awoke, hearing a peculiar sound, like something creeping stealthily along the floor.

"Who's there?" he cried, starting up.

There was no reply, and Mr. Writher, believing that his rest had been disturbed by a rat, threw a pillow on the floor, and then rolled over to go to sleep again.

But, oh, horror! the bed began to rise, and so did Mr. Writher's hair.

"This is awful!" he gasped, as great beads of perspiration burst out upon his brow. "I must be dreaming!"

The last words had scarcely passed his lips when he was nearly jerked out of bed.

"Help!" he cried, faintly.

Again the bed moved, and leaping out of bed, he thrust his head through a pane of glass and made night hideous with his yells.

Gooch, who had been napping, came up, springing his rattle.

"Hullo, there!" he roared. "What is the matter? What are you kicking up all that row about?"

"There is a burglar or murderer under my bed!" Mr. Writher shrieked.

"Hold him till I come!" Gooch said, in a state of great excitement. "My mate will be around in a moment, and we'll take him to the station."

Mrs. Nudgeham, hearing the commotion, ran down-stairs, and opening the front door, ran into Gooch's arms.

"Oh, good Mr. Policeman, protect me! I am only a poor lone woman, but I don't want to die before my time!"

"You ain't a-goin' to die, ma'am," said Gooch; "so cheer up. Ah! here comes my mate. Come along, Jack; we've got a good catch at last."

The officers went up-stairs, and found Mr. Writher clinging to the window-sill and trembling in every limb.

"Where's the fellow?" Gooch demanded.

"Under the bed," Mr. Writher replied, as well as his chattering teeth would allow him to speak. "Be very careful, for he may be armed with some dangerous weapon."

Jack Nobbler, Gooch's brother-officer, drew his truncheon, and went down on his hands and knees.

"There ain't no man here!" he growled, looking up. "This is a sell, and it's my belief that the gentleman has been dreaming."

"I assure you that I was wide awake, and in full possession of my faculties," Mr. Writher replied.

"Then where's the chap?" Gooch demanded. "He couldn't get away without us seeing him."

"Ten to one he's in the chimbly," Gooch said. "Keep your heye open, Jack, and land him a buster when he comes down. Don't give him time to show fight."

"I won't," Nobbler replied, and he evidently meant it.

But there was nobody in the chimney; nobody in the wardrobe; nobody in the cupboard, and the two constables looked disdainfully at Mr. Writher.

"It's a busted shame to call us off our beats for nothin'," Nobbler said. "The best chap in the world can't catch a nightmare."

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"How dare you say such a thing," Mr. Writher cried. "If I was not disturbed by the living, this room is haunted. I will swear in any court of law that the bed was moved three times, as if some person was endeavoring to creep out from under it."

"Just wot I thought," Gooch returned. "I've thought more than once that everything in my room was goin' round. You shouldn't mix your liquors, sir."

"You impudent scoundrel!" Mr. Writher spared. "I will report you to the magistrates."

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Loading his cart he went to the stable for Rattler, the donkey, but that noble animal had vanished in the most mysterious manner.

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Mark Philo had watched the bricklayer out, and on reporting the circumstance, it was at once agreed to take Rattler out for a little exercise.

The donkey did not take to his new masters very kindly, especially when half a dozen tried to get on his back at the same time, and being an animal of more than ordinary sense, he threw himself down and rolled.

Of course, Tony Limpback was in the way, and suffered a rather severe squeezing, much to the delight of Rattler, who pricked up his ears and flourished his heels in the air.

"I say," Bertie Baldwin cried, "wouldn't it be a lark to deck him out with ribbons, and paint him some nice bright color?"

"That's a heppy thought," Walpole said; "but where is the paint?"

"We can soon get that," Baldwin replied. "I know where I can get some already mixed for use. What color shall I get?"

"A nice bright color, I think, would look the best," Harry Walpole replied. "Why don't you get out of the way, Tony? You'll have your brains knocked out in a minute."

"The beggar keeps turning round so quickly that I can scarcely get out of the way," Tony said. "Why don't some of you fellows hold his hind legs?"

Baldwin ran into the town in search of the paint, and he was not gone long.

He also brought some bright-blue ribbons with him, and in almost less time than it takes to record Rattler was one of the most extraordinary animals ever seen by mortal eyes.

"What shall we do with him?" Walpole said, as he held his sides and roared with laughter. "Oh, my! Old Slapdasher will go into a fit."

"Turn him loose," Baldwin said, "and we can follow and see what happens."

Rattler evidently did not like the smell of paint, and appeared not to relish the gay ribbons which had been fastened upon his ears, as he bit furiously at them, and finding they would not come off, made a sudden rush, and plunged madly up the street.

Gooch was coming the other way, and when he saw the strange and horrifying picture he fell over a milkman's pail, and almost impaled himself on some area railings.

"Wot is it?" he gasped, as he picked himself up. "It must be summat escaped from a wild-beast show."

"I don't know wot it is," a fat old gentleman said, turning deadly pale. "It is an unknown animal. I hope it will not seize and devour any unfortunate creature."

"Bust me if I know wot to make of it!" Gooch said. "It seemed to be on fire."

He started off in pursuit of the rampant animal, but Rattler was too quick for him, and had scared half a dozen respectable people out of their senses before he had time to get round the corner.

A tall swell, with an eyeglass, ran into a glass shop, and brought down a pile of plates with a crash, and an apple-woman deserted her stall and threw her arms round a clergyman's neck, who, under the influence of Rattler's sudden appearance, and the old woman's sudden embrace, sat down with a flop on the ground and kicked spasmodically.

Rattler rushed onward, and every living thing gave him a wide berth, and it was not until the noble animal reached the open country that he adopted a moderate pace.

Some gypsies on their way to the town came upon the strange spectacle, and took Rattler prisoner.

"We can make something out of this," one swarthy fellow said, winking. "I wonder who it belongs to?"

"To a madman, I should think," another replied. "It's a good donkey, and I rate that we keep it."

"And get lagged for the job," said a third.

"Hi, there," shouted a faint voice from the distance.

The gypsies turned and espied Jonah Slapdasher coming along at a furious pace.

"Take care, Ronald," said the gypsy who held the donkey. "If the man is mad, he may be dangerous. Knock him down if he comes too close."

"I won't," Nobbler replied, and he evidently meant it.

But there was nobody in the chimney; nobody in the wardrobe; nobody in the cupboard, and the two constables looked disdainfully at Mr. Writher.

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"The beggar keeps turning round so quickly

"Thee be a cheeky young warmint," said the farmer, "but after thou'rt cool I'll warm thy hide for thee."

"And very kind and considerate of you," Mark replied; "but if you will take my advice you will go home and make yourself happy. As soon as my friends miss me they will come back, and you will get the worst of it by a long chalk."

Mark had scarcely given expression to this opinion, when there was a sound of boys' voices in the distance, crying: "Rescue! rescue!"

Mark Philo heard the welcome sound, and laughed aloud.

"I told you so," he said. "Hurrah! Boys, I am here, up to my neck in water."

The farmer turned just in time to receive a lump of soft clay full on the nose, and another which knocked his hat off and sent it with a splash into the pond.

"Good of you," Mark cried. "Let him have it hot. He gave me a stinger," Tony Limpback roared, "and now I'll take it out of him."

And picking up a turnip in the last stage of decay, the youth hurled it at the farmer.

The vegetable, true to its aim, splashed all over the farmer's features, and before he could see what took place next, Mark was out of the pond, and being assisted homeward at a pace that defied pursuit.

"I'll call on the schulemaster, and have 'em whacked for this," the farmer spluttered, "and if they don't squeal bine murder, my name beant John Gollee."

(To be continued.)

The "Three Merry Boys" was commenced in No. 624.

FIGURE SKATING.

HE who has fairly mastered the outside edge forward is introduced at once to the study of the "figures," properly so called, and of these the first that invite his attention are the "circle" and the "three." The former is nothing more than a mere continuation of the lesson he has just learned. It is at once the simplest and most beautiful of the skating figures, and yet one that is now seldom learned to perfection.

To accomplish it, start on the right foot with a strong, bold stroke, leaning the body rather far out of the perpendicular, so as to insure a rapid curve, and continuing that curve firmly and steadily until a circle is almost entirely completed.

By this time your impetus will be pretty well exhausted; but before you come quite to a standstill, bring the left foot (which, of course, has been hitherto held just behind the other) to the front; cross it quickly over the right foot, and as the latter completes its stroke, put the left down at an angle pointing well to the *right*; throw the whole weight of the body at the same time steadily to the right, so as to rest it entirely on the foot just put down, and thus commence another stroke of precisely the same sort, describing another circle on the left.

These successive circles, all returning nearly to the same spot, constitute each the half of a very handsome figure, resembling accurately the Arabic symbol 8. Of course, it is not to be supposed that the beginner will succeed at once in making the ends of the circles fit with one another. Many of the strokes will come far short of the proper distance.

Sometimes the impetus will fail long before the circle is completed; at other times the skater will march, animated by some spirit of eccentricity, will fly off provokingly in a wrong direction, and leave the beginner helplessly wandering far away from the point at which he expected to arrive.

All these disasters must not discourage him. Practice will give confidence; and the two together will triumph surely in the end. Above all, do not look down upon the ice to watch whether the feet are going in the right direction. Get a friend, if you can, or if you can't, stand at the place whence you started, and shape your course by looking toward him. But do not on any account, as some do, put an orange on the ice and steer to that. The head must always be kept upright, and the eyes raised. Once let them down, and it is all up with your hopes of skating properly.

The other grand rule is to keep the circles large; eight feet should be the *minimum* diameter of any circle, and this is much too small.

We have begun by describing the eight as properly skated, with the feet crossed; but it is possible to execute a very capital eight without crossing the feet at all.

When it is desired to practice one foot especially, or to give the other foot a rest, it is a capital plan to interpose between the two circles of the common eight a half-stroke, thus describing the full circles, say on the right foot only, while the easier semicircles remain for the less practiced or weaker foot. Here, too, is a capital opportunity for executing a simple concerted figure. The other skater performs one of the semicircles while you are doing your own, each on the left foot; then you skate each your full circle at the end on the right foot, passing one another once more as you each return upon the left.

Of course any amount of half-circles may be interposed, leaving the entire circles for the ends. Or there may be a central circle from which four or any other number of others diverge. Or finally, the circles may be made to interlace one another in an infinite variety of series.

(To be continued.)

Talks with Boys about Foreign Lands.

LXXXII.—CALCUTTA.

CALCUTTA, the capital of the British province of Bengal, is the metropolis of British India and seat of the supreme government of that country. Its real name is Kali-Ghatta, the ghaut, or landing-place, of the goddess Kali, wife of Siva.

The scenery around Calcutta is exceedingly picturesque. No harbor is visible at the mouth of the Hoogly, on which stream the city of Calcutta is built. The channel is marked out by buoys and lighthouses, and must be followed many miles inland before the low lands of the Sunderbunds can be detected. As you near the city, which extends about six miles along the river, and has an average breadth of two miles, the botanical gardens are perceived on the west bank. These beautiful gardens are stocked with a very large variety of indigenous and exotic plants, and the background is handsomely ornamented by a picturesque gothic edifice, erected under the auspices of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts. The magnificent suburb known as Garden Reach, opposite the river anchorage, occupies the east shore, with country-seats surrounded by elegant gardens.

Here stands the vast and magnificent palace of the dethroned King of Oude, where he resides as a pensioned prisoner of state, receiving from the British Government an annual income of £60,000. The architecture of this palace is gorgeous and very much admired.

In the Maidan plain, not far from the river, is Fort William, the citadel of Calcutta. This monster fortress is defended by low and octagonal works, three sides of which face the Hoogly. Six hundred and twenty guns are mounted on the works, and fifteen thousand troops are requisite to defend it.

Beyond the Maidan, to the northward, rises the City of Palaces, as Calcutta is called, and viewed from the river the appearance is so magnificent as to justify the title. Opposite the town the river varies in width from a quarter to three-fourths of a mile, and affords anchorage for ships of fifteen hundred tons burden, in six or seven fathoms of water.

Owing to the hurricanes which sometimes prevail, the roadstead is not a very safe one, and it is usual to moor vessels to the shore, as a precautionary measure. The water-front is bordered by a quay two miles long, called the Strand. This quay is forty feet above low-water mark, with ghauts, or landing-places, at intervals along it.

Calcutta is divided into two districts: the Northern or native district, and the Southern or European district. The section of the city occupied by the Europeans is called Chowringee. The European houses are built with great taste and elegance, and are ornamented with spacious verandas. In the quarter inhabited by the native population the streets are narrow and unpaved, with lofty houses, loopholed in the upper stories, and occupied as shops or stores on the ground-floor.

There is much poverty and filth in many localities. Each of the extensive squares of the European quarter inclose a large tank of water. This tank, situated in the middle of each square, is surrounded by a planted walk, and tends to keep the air cool.

A street sixty feet in width intersects the city parallel to its greatest length. The Strand extends southward along the river border of the Maidan, and forms the favorite pleasure-drive of the European residents and wealthy natives. The palace of the viceroy, known as Government House, is the finest edifice in Calcutta. It stands in a conspicuous locality, is of massive proportions, and consists of a spacious central structure, surrounded by four great wings, and surmounted by a magnificent dome. The post-office is built on the site of the memorable black-hole, and with the other government buildings is situated on the Esplanade. The equestrian statue of Lord Hardinge and the monument to David Ochterlony are worthy of note.

For the most part the residences of the foreign merchants and officials are east of the Maidan, the eastern boundary of which is the Chowringee road. Many of these houses are palatial, some of the most elegant being in a range on a line with Government House and Esplanade row. In addition to those already mentioned, the principal buildings comprise the new Anglican Cathedral, the mint, the numerous Christian churches, the Mohammedan mosques and the Hindoo temples.

There are many educational institutions, secular and religious, the University of Calcutta being the most important of the former. The Madrussa or Mohammedan college; the Hindoo college, the Sanskrit college, and the Anglo-Indian college are establishments also under government control.

Calcutta is supplied with water by means of tanks constructed to collect periodical rains. All endeavors to procure water by boring have hitherto failed, even though the soil has been pierced to a depth of five hundred feet. The tanks, of which the city contains more than one thousand, are of masonry, and preserve the water in excellent condition. It is distributed by carriers, who carry it about in leathern bags. Of late the climate has been somewhat ameliorated by the adoption of proper sanitary measures, but of its extreme unhealthiness during the hot season there can be no doubt. When Summer sets in, every official who can leave Calcutta immediately does so.

The British merchants form by far the most influential and wealthy class of inhabitants, and are noted for their hospitality. The shops and bazaars are furnished with a plainness which must strike a stranger forcibly; but every kind of goods of every quality can be purchased as readily as in England.

The commerce of nearly all the interior of Bengal, and of a very large proportion of India, centres in Calcutta. The chief exports are opium, cotton, rice, indigo, jute, seeds, silk, hides, saltpetre, sugar and lac; the principal imports comprise cotton twist and yarns, piece goods, metals, railway materials, machinery, wines and spirits, salt, wooden goods, malt liquor, wearing apparel, books and stationery.

Calcutta is connected by railway with Bombay, and with all the large cities of Northern and Central India, and by regular steamship lines with Europe and all the great countries of the East.

The site of Calcutta was originally occupied by the village of Govindpore. In 1686 the English factories at Hoogly were removed thither by the East India Company.

In 1700 three small villages near the factories, one of which bore the name of Calcutta, were assigned to the British by the native rulers. One of these villages occupied the site of the present European quarter, another stood where the native residences are now erected, and the third has given place to the beautiful plain on the south side of the city, in the midst of which stands the citadel.

In 1756 the settlement was captured by Surajah Dowlah, the subahdar of Bengal. The survivors of the British garrison, consisting of one hundred and forty-six men, were locked up in a room eighteen feet square. There were only two windows, both opening toward the west, whence, under the best of circumstances, but little air could enter, which was further impeded by projecting verandas outside and thick iron bars within.

At the same time, conflagrations raging in different parts of the fort gave the atmosphere an unusual oppressiveness. In a short time their sufferings from thirst and the fetid, stifling air became terrible, and in a few hours several had died. Only twenty-three survived till morning, when they were released. The black-hole is now used as a warehouse, and an obelisk, fifty feet high, erected in memory of the victims, stands before the gate.

The British forces, under Clive, regained supremacy early in the following year. The construction of Fort William, the most extensive and elaborate regular fortress in India, was begun in 1757, after the battle of Plassey.

The subsequent career of Calcutta has been peaceful and prosperous, and now numbers about 600,000 inhabitants.

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THE ROUND TABLE.

PRIZES.

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ANSWERS TO RIDDLES, ETC., IN No. 638.

1. Lydia, Edith, Nora, (May, Dora, Amina, Kate. 2. C, She, Stalk, Charles, Ellen, Ken, S. 3. Glow, Worm—GuffaW, LassO, OrdeR, WigwaM. 4. Cordial. 5. Fancy-dress-ball. 6. Flirt, Idea, Nest, Kate. 7. Sledge, Ledge, Edge. 8. Bay. 9. Saive, Save. 10. Pericarp, Emu-rapeu, Ruminate, Irigated, Canadian, A-pat-in-ma, Re-ten-man, Fe-edna-nd. 11. Astor, Appleton, Reed, Walker, Beard, Bishop, Mills, Harper, Butler, Rice, Hays, Cooper, Dix, Train, Church, Hart, Jackson.

WINNERS OF PRIZES IN No. 638.

1.—Blanchet, Box 76, Morristown, N. J.

2.—Charles A. Chipley, Pittsburg, Pa.

3.—E. A. McLeod, 392 West Fourth Street, Cincinnati, O.

ENIGMAS, CHARADES, ETC.

1.—ARITHMOREM.

TAKE a hundred human beings—
Nay, take five hundred more—
Even add, and then,
To complete the score,
Take the smallest insect
That you well can find,
And nothing but a vagrant,
Comes from all combined.

2.—CHARADE.

A boy's flame for short,
Off heard in the street,
An article that already
In this puzzle you meet.
Man's last extremities
Mid snow and sleet,
Will give you a vegetable
You often have eat.

3.—CHARADE.

Barney O'Hea, from the sweet town of Bray,
Trips off so gayly to Donnybrook fair;
At the first so frisky he tipples the whisky,
And ogles the girls, who all do declare
He is the broth of a boy, their hearts to annoy.
For the dance he rises with sweet Mary Casey,
With his blackthorn twig, in hornpipe or jig,
So neatly he presses the face of the daisy.
Big Tim O'Leary, being jealous of Mary,
Started a second, and, herded, very soon
Before he said Jack, he was knocked on his back.
They brought him home in a whole, by the light of the moon.

4.—ENIGMA.

I often murmur, yet I never weep;
I always lie in bed, but never sleep;
My mouth is wide, and larger than my head,
And much disgorges, though it ne'er is fed;
I have no legs or feet, yet swiftly run,
And the more fails I get move laster on.

5.—DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

Primals are over and above;
Finals a garment, not a glove;
My whole you prize in Winter's day,
And in the Summer stow away.

Relating to the eye this term does mean,
By this the president's stern will is seen;
A fitble island where a great man went;
To gather this the agent prompt is sent.

6.—SQUARE WORDS.

A tree; a month; a king of Troy; untruthful people; trees and a vowel.

7.—DIAMOND PUZZLE.

A consonant; a share; close and a vowel; perceive; an entertainment; skill; a consonant.

8.—SQUARE WORDS.

Belonging to the stars; to endeavor; occupations; equestrians; disinclined; to diminish.

9.—CHARADE.

A lady wears my second near my first;
A culprit wears my whole;
A mother's first my second oft will give,
When hopeful's quarreled, misbehaved, or stole.

10.—CHANGES.

Consult me well, I'll guide you o'er the main;
Losing my head you'll hunt me o'er the plain;
One letter drop, and I am useful still;
In every craft I'm seen and work of skill;
Transposed now I am of loathesome race;
Transposed again, again the main I trace.

FUN FOR THE BOYS.

"CUT OUT."

It is many years since I fell in love with Jerusha Skreggs, the handsomest gal by far that ever went on legs. By meadow, creek and wood and dell, often did we walk, and the moonlight smiled on our meeting lips, and night winds hearked our talk. Jerusha Jane was all to me, my heart was young and true, and loved with a double and twisted love, and a love that was honest, too. I roamed all over the neighbors' fine farms, and robbed the widowed bowers, and tore my trowsers and scratched my hands in search of choicest flowers. In my boyish love I brought all these to my Jerusha Jane; I wouldn't be so foolish now if I were a boy again. A city chap that came along all dressed up in store clothes, with a shiny hat, a shiny vest, and a mustache under his nose. He talked to her of singing schools (for her father owned a farm), and she left me, her country love, and took the new chap's arm. And all that night I never slept, nor could I eat next day, for I loved that girl with a fervent love that naught could drive away. I strove to win her back to me, but it was all in vain. The city chap with hairy lip married Jerusha Jane. And my heart was sick and sore until the thought struck me, that just as good fish remained as e'er were caught in the sea. So I went to the Methodist Church one night, and saw a dark-brown curl peeping under a gypsy hat, and I married that very girl. And many years have passed and gone, and I think my loss my gain; and I often bless that city chap who stole Jerusha Jane.

THE BOY WHO WANTED A DRINK.

Bob Burdette, the *Hawk-Eye* man, has been traveling some recently, and he writes about some characters he has met on the cars, among them the boy who is continually thirsty. Every parent will bear testimony to the truthfulness of the description:

Moreover I saw the boy who wanted a drink. A restless, questioning, uneasy, thirsty boy. He let the window fall on his fingers before the train had gone a mile. He stood out on the platform until he was incrusted two inches deep with ashes and dust and cinders. He went to the water-cooler and got a drink, then he came back and told his mother he was hot and went back and got another drink. He drank about four times per mile, seldom oftener, unless he was seized with a sudden uncontrollable spasm of thirst. If he was drinking and somebody else came after a drink, the boy would suddenly seize the cup he had just set down and refill it and drink as though he had wrapped his stomach in the desert of Sahara, glaring suspiciously over the top of the cup at the waiting passenger as he drank. When he was in his seat he watched the aisle narrowly, and if he saw any passenger get up and move toward the water-cooler, he would jump and race for it. If he got there first he would drink and snore over the cup until the thirsty traveler forgot what he went down there after. People began to wonder how much the boy was ganged for, and if he wasn't rather straining his capacity. The remotest hint or suggestion was enough to send him to the cooler. When the train ran over a creek the water made him think of his thirst. When it rattled over a long stretch of dry prairie, the absence of water drove him mad.

I was afraid the supply of water would give out before the boy was filled up, and he was a rather small boy, too. His interior circumference, I think, must have inclosed an area double in extent to that inclosed by the exterior of the belt. Near Waseca, we ran nearly a mile without the boy making a stop at the tank. I grew very nervous now, for I was fearful that during such an unheard-of abstinence from water his pumps would run dry, rust out, and he might blow up. So I leaned over the edge of the seat and said, carelessly:

"By George! but I am thirsty. I wonder if there is any water on this car?"

You want to understand me now, as recording very plainly, and without any mental reservation, that that boy's mother sitting beside him was no fool. Her eyes snapped when she heard my careless and innocent remark, she took in every syllable of it, and she turned on me in a flash, with:

"I wish you would mind your own business, and leave my boy alone!"

A low, mocking murmur of applause went through the car, a little of it for the indignant mother, some of it for the charity boy, but most of it for me. She suppressed yours truly very successfully, but it was too late. Long before she finished that brief sentence, her boy was down at the water-cooler, holding his eyes tight shut to keep the water from running out of them, while he flooded his system as though he had taken a contract to keep up a perennial Baptist revival inside of himself.

JOHNNY'S STORY.

One time there was a barber. And one day a feller he cum in the shop for to git shafed, and he handed the barber a card wich was wrot on like this way:

For my hair—Taller, clone, lard, bergmot, pematum, oil, tonick, restoratil, pitchooly gum, beeswhacks, kerriseen and tar.

For my face—Cole cream, camfrice, powder, ham fat, sef sope, glasears, poltics, rooje nammel, glant cement, shoo blakin.

For my wiskers—Sames for the hair, only more taller.

For my muchtash—Do, starch, glew, morter and soddier.

Wen the barber he red it he was jest delited, and he said to the feller, "You are the most sensible man wich has ever set in this chair; yes indeed, I never seed a man of such good taste."

And then the barber shafed the feller, and tole him all the new wich he cud think, and never stopt tockin, the barber dident, while he shafed, cos he was delighted. But jest as he got dun shafen the feller, and was gettin' ready to put them things outo him, cordin' to the memmy randem, a man wocked in and took the feller by the ear, and he sed to the barber, the man did, "This feller's got to go now, cos he is a escape; if you want to finish him you must fetch them things over to the def and dumb ward of the insattie syium."

THE LOVER'S QUERY.

Her hair was yellow; strands of gold
Fell o'er her shoulders, told on told;
Her eyes were of a heavenly hue:
She wore a number seven shoe.

Her taper fingers, taper waist,
Were fashioned to the average taste;
Her nose was high, her jaws were strong,
Her nails were sharp (perhaps too long);
And though not young, a comely maid
Was she when in her best arrayed.

Though many praised her yellow hair,
Though village poets called her fair,
Yet in the heaven of her eyes
At times there shone such stormy dyes,
That never lover left her door
But what this question probed him sore:
"How would I fare if things went wrong
Within the reach of nails so long?
If she got mad what could I do
Against a number seven shoe?"

If you would rise in the world you must not stop to kick at every cur who barks at you as you pass along.

"WHAT'S the matter with your eye, Tommy?" "Oh, it's only been going through an operation at the hands of an knockulist, that's all."

A WONDERFUL MUSICAL NOVELTY.

THE Phonographic Cornet; any tune played without any knowledge of music; took the prize at the Paris Exposition.

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The Mass. Organ Co., 46 Kilby St., Boston, Mass., Sole Agts.

FUN FOR THE BOYS.

WHEN a man's chin-whiskers turn gray before the hair on his head does, it shows which part of him has done the most work.

BARNUM advertised for a cherry-colored cat. An Irishman answered, and offered to bring him a fine tom cherry-colored pussy for twenty dollars in advance. The money was sent, and a black cat brought. To Barnum's remonstrance, the Irishman, with a shrug of his shoulders, asked Barnum if he had never seen black cherries; if so, this cat was cherry-color.

A YOUNG woman from the rural districts entered a dry-goods store the other day and asked for a pair of stockings. The clerk politely asked her what number she wore. "Why, two, you fool. Do you think I am a centipede, or that I have a wooden leg?"

ON GOING TO CHURCH.

Some go to church just for a walk;
Some go there to laugh and talk;
Some go there for speculation;
Some go there for observation;
Some go there to meet a lover;
Some the impulse oft discover;
Some go there to meet a friend;
Some go there the time to spend;
Some go to learn the parson's name;
Some go there to wound his fame;
Many go there to doze and nod;
But few go there to worship God!

WHAT species of bird has neither feathers nor beak? The lady-bird.

IT is reported that a woman is cultivating a fern farm, and finds it profitable. It probably fern-ishes her a good living.

SOME people say that twenty minutes is about the proper length of a sermon. In the case of bad boys it is not so much the length of the sermon their fathers preach to them about their evil ways that troubles them as the length of the accompanying strap.

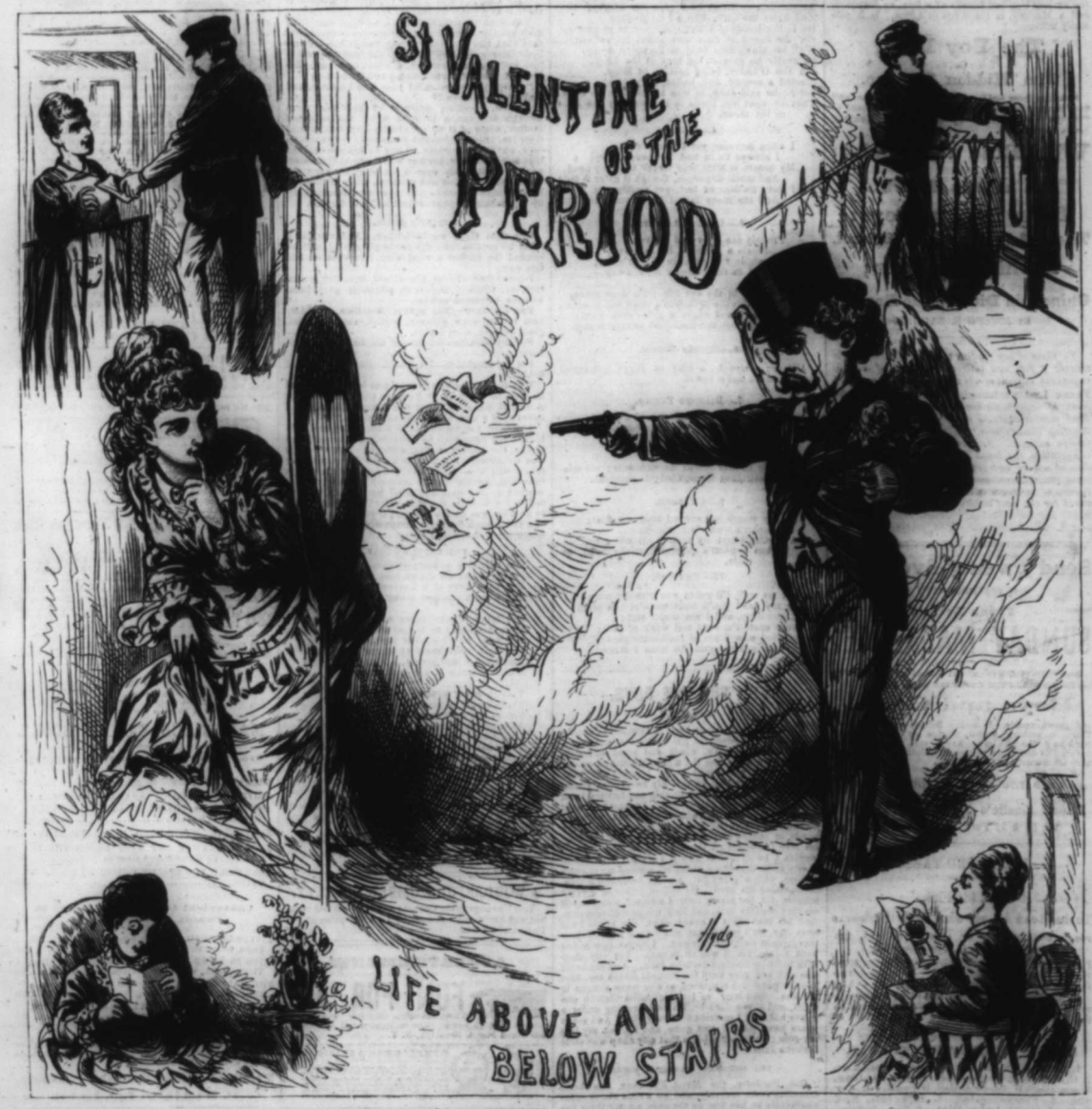
THE proverb says the devil is not so black as he is painted. With regard to the "devil" usually rampant in printing-offices, he could scarcely be made any blacker if he was painted.

"WHAT is the matter?" asked a lawyer of his coachman. "The horses are running away, sir." "Can you not pull them up?" "I am afraid not." "Then," said the lawyer, after judicial delay, "run into something cheap."

IT is said that some women who borrow a quart of milk from a neighbor always makes a p'int of returning it."

THE "centre of trade"—A.

"HAVE you seen any mad dogs go by here just now?" cried out a bad little Massachusetts boy. "Mad dogs—mercy!" gasped the woman, and she threw four wet shirts on the ground in a heap and got into the house at four bounds. The boy maintained his position, and after a few minutes the woman put her head out of the door and asked: "Have you?" "Noah," was the calm reply. "I guess the season for 'em has drawed to a close." "You miserable boy! why did you alarm me so?" she exclaimed as she opened the door and stood on the step. "Who's bin alarmed? I guess if I want to find a mad dog I've got a right to inquire if any has gone by, haven't I? You don't expect me to go an' git out full-sheet posters and leave 'em at houses, do you? or pay for a double-column ad? Humph! The idee that a boy can't jist inquire about mad dogs!"



BEFORE UNCOURTHOUS.—"Suppose," said a lawyer to a witness he was trying to badger recently—"suppose I should tell you that I could bring a dozen men of your town to this court-room who would say they would not believe you on oath, what would you say?" And calmly the witness made reply: "I would say you lied." A gentle smile diffused itself all over the court-room, and the unruffled witness stepped down.

RICHES will take to themselves wings and fly away unless you sprinkle the salt of economy on their tail.

"HOW DID my little girl get on with her alphabet?" asked a mother of a school-teacher. "She was lost at C, ma'am," was the reply.

"MR. PRESIDENT," said a delegate in a recent convention, "I think we should adjourn till to-morrow, as I notice that there are fifteen delegates in this convention here who are absent."

USED UP.—A parasol—when the sun shines.

A COMPOSITION ON "BOY."—A teacher was practicing her youthful class in original composition, and gave one pupil the subject "Boy," to write upon. The subject was to be treated of in three parts—first, what is it? second, what is its use? and third, what is it made of? The lad wrestled hard for a few minutes in desperate perplexity, and then wandered up to the teacher's desk radiant with enthusiasm, and submitted the following: "A boy is an animal; his use is to carry in wood; he is made of bones."

TO CUT your poor relations "dead," don't mention them in your will.

WHY is the letter "h" the least important in the alphabet? Because it is the centre of nothing.

IN an account of a six-oared boat-race, the printer made it a six-eared goat race.

TWO or the worst puns on record—The largest ant is the eleph-ant; and the worst relation is the earh-uncle.

EARLY rising was strongly advocated by the Duke of Wellington, who used to say, "When a man turns over in bed, it is high time to turn out of it." No doubt he believed that "one good turn deserves another."

A BOSTON schoolmistress threatened to keep an unruly boy fifteen minutes after school. "I wish you'd make it half an hour," said the appreciative youth, "for you're the prettiest teacher in this town."

"WHAT straits are the most perilous?" asked the Sunday-school superintendent, and a little boy spoke up promptly: "Whisky straights!" and the boy was right.

DOES a lawyer use figures of speech when summing up an argument?

"YOUR room is better than your company," as the examiner of the bankrupt insurance corporation said to its president, as he glanced at the elegant offices.

THE corn loons up from the fields in shocks,
And the young man goeth for warmer socks,
And the pigeons skim through the air in flocks,
And a hoarseness hints when grow the cocks,
And the merchant "salteth" his Summer socks,
And the white hat getteth a host of knocks,
And the small boy saveth his Xmas "rocks,"
But what's gone wrong with the squinox?

PEOPLE have a greater respect for the sun than they have for the moon. It pleases a girl to tell her that she has a sunny disposition, but tell her she has a luny one, and then see.

SOMEBODY wrote to Hamilton Fish to get his terms for a lecture, and he replied: "C. O. D. Fish."

TEACHER: "What kind of a verb is love?" *Young Lady Pupil:* "A fine-tight verb."

ONE of the earliest financial transactions on record is where "Distance lent Enchantment to the view."